MONSTROUS 'OTHERS': THE LEGACY OF RACE, HYBRIDITY, AND INTERSECTIONALITY IN THE NINETEENTH-CENTURY NOVEL

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by

Valerie Beth Oualline

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DEDICATION

For my daughter, Bayleigh, who shares my passion for literature, theatre, and social justice. May you continue to develop these passions as you grow into a strong, fierce woman.

And for my sisters, Stacy and Nicole, my two oldest and dearest friends. Strong women need other strong women in their lives: women with whom they can laugh, cry, vent, and eat cheese dip. You have been all of those things for me, and much more. This is “just a little reminder.”

ABSTRACT

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In the late eighteen and early nineteenth centuries, the construct of race became fixed in the collective consciousness of Europeans, in large part due to the efforts of Enlightenment-age scientists who sought to classify and define all species. Much of their research is eventually used to justify both slavery and colonization. The racial stereotypes established by these race scientists also permeate the literature of the nineteenth century. Into this world are born Frankenstein's Creature, Bertha Mason, and Heathcliff, three characters who function as racial 'Others' in their respective texts, *Frankenstein*, *Jane Eyre*, and *Wuthering Heights*. However, Mary Shelley, Charlotte Brontë, and Emily Brontë, the three women writers who craft these characters, both confirm and challenge race stereotypes. The first four chapters of this thesis will explore the construct of race and how it is reflected and subverted through the characters who function as racial 'Others.'

The three nineteenth-century novels that comprise the primary focus of this thesis each present characters that reflect nineteenth-century beliefs about racial 'Others'; however, these characters are more than just flat stereotypes or mere caricature. Instead, they are so complex, so compelling, so nuanced, that they demand reinterpretation. The final chapter will explore three twentieth- and twenty-first-century texts that have adapted and updated the characters: Victor LaValle's *Destroyer*, Jean Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea*, and Maryse Condé's *Windward Heights*. The three twentieth- and twenty-first-century reimaginings of these characters—a prequel, a sequel, and a remake—are compelling

enough individually to demand close study of the way LaValle, Rhys, and Condé address issues of race and gender in their own time by reinterpreting nineteenth-century characters. Together, these three texts extend the discussion on how nineteenth-century attitudes toward race and empire continue to impact discourse and attitudes regarding racial Otherness in the twenty-first century.

KEY WORDS: Nineteenth century women writers, Construct of race, Race science, Scientific racism, The Other, Racial Others, Othering, Intersectionality, Hybridity, Liminality, *Frankenstein*, Frankenstein's Creature, *Jane Eyre*, Bertha Mason, *Wuthering Heights*, Heathcliff, Mary Shelley, Emily Brontë, Charlotte Brontë, Victor LaValle's *Destroyer*, Jean Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Maryse Condé, *Windward Heights*

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

A defining political issue in the twenty-first century, in both the United States and across Europe, is the issue of immigration, fearsome racial 'Others' that cross borders, invade civilized society, terrorize citizens. Fears surrounding immigrants are driving policy changes, impacting election outcomes, and leading to an increase in nationalism across America and Europe. The fear of immigrants, however, only applies to certain groups of people. Throughout the Western world, the stereotypical image of a dangerous immigrant is dark-skinned and ethnically non-European. Americans do not fear immigrants from Canada; the British are not concerned about immigrants from France. The fears fueling increased nationalism, then, are largely based on appearance and the racial stereotypes associated with appearance: it is only the dark-skinned 'Other' who threatens to destroy Western civilization. These fears that surround racial 'Others' are rooted in the science, or pseudoscience, of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the Age of Enlightenment-era efforts to examine and classify and understand the mysteries of the world and all the things in it. Those scientific studies form the foundation of racial stereotypes that continue even through the twentieth and twenty-first centuries: people of Asian descent are smart but potentially dangerous; people of African descent have diminished mental capacity and are prone to violence. Such stereotypes have been challenged and debunked again and again, yet they persist because they are so deeply ingrained in the collective social and cultural consciousness of the Western world.

The term *Other* as it is used in this study signifies the individual who is removed from the subject position that is traditionally occupied by one who is both European and

male. Othering can be a result of racial difference, as discussed by postcolonial theorists; gender difference, as discussed by feminist theorists; class difference, as discussed by Marxist theorists; or an intersection of some combination of the three. This study focuses primarily on the racial Other, and explores issues related to gender and class only as they intersect with race. In her introduction to *The Second Sex*, Simone de Beauvoir writes that "the *Other* is as primordial as consciousness itself," which is "a fundamental category of human thought" (xxii-xxiii); as a result, "no group ever sets itself up as the One without at once setting up the Other over against itself" (xxiii). This is true in a patriarchal society in which men occupy the subject position as One while women are Othered, and it is also true in Western culture, both in colonial and postcolonial periods as the white European occupies the subject position as One while non-Europeans are Othered. In *Black Skin, White Mask*, Frantz Fanon explains that once a person grasps Lacan's concept of the Other, "one can have no further doubt that the real Other for the white man is and will continue to be the black man. And conversely. Only for the white man The Other is perceived on the level of the body image, absolutely as the not-self—that is, the unidentifiable, the unassimilable" (124). The concept of the 'Other' concerns difference, contrast: the self is defined by its contrast from the 'Other.' This is particularly true for colonized 'Others,' who become the basis for defining and extolling Europeanness through contrast with the lesser, 'darker' races. As Homi K. Bhabha notes, "the exercise of colonial power through discourse demands an articulation of forms of difference" (150). Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak argues that "[n]o perspective *critical* of imperialism can turn the Other into a self, because the project of imperialism has always already historically refracted what might have been the absolutely Other into a domesticated

Other that consolidates the imperialist self" (253). Focusing primarily on the racial 'Other' in the nineteenth century allows for an exploration of how the construct of race is developed and solidified within the Western consciousness, and how the stereotypes associated with racial 'Otherness' permeate literature.

Race Pseudoscience in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries

Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, several key factors, including the expansion of colonization and global trade as well as Enlightenment efforts to classify and define, led to stereotyping and fear surrounding cultural and racial 'Others.' One key figure in developing our concept of race is Carolus Linnaeus, a Swedish-born zoologist, who, in his book *Systema Naturae*, sought to understand "the difference between and hierarchical placement of the animal, plant, and mineral kingdoms" (Reid-Merritt 5); however, his work was soon politicized by American slaveholders and used to justify a hierarchy among the human race. Not long after Linnaeus published his work, other scientists followed suit. Debates between monogenists, those who believe that all humans share a common ancestor, and polygenists, those who believe that humans with genetic variations such as skin color and facial features have different ancestry, were prevalent throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but German physician Johann Friedrich Blumenbach was the first to create a classification system for race, first establishing four racial groups—Caucasian, Mongolian, Ethiopian, and American—and eventually adding Malayan as the fifth.[1] While hair color and texture are discussed, Blumenbach lists skin color as the key defining feature of each racial group, which established the association of white, yellow, black, red, and brown with the

[1] See Blumenbach's *Elements of Physiology* and *On the Natural Variety of Mankind*

corresponding racial groups and laid the groundwork of using superficial characteristics to determine biological, social, and intellectual difference.

Blumenbach's theories form the foundation of beliefs regarding race eschewed by nineteenth-century British physicians James Cowles Prichard of the Medical Infirmary in Bristol and William Lawrence of St. Bartholomew's Hospital in London. Lawrence, in his *Lectures on Physiology, Zoology, and the Natural History of Man*, repeats and expands on Blumenbach's theories on race but also adds moral characteristics for each race, ultimately concluding that the 'darker' races differ from Caucasians in temperament and impulse control. Of the general character of most native Americans, Africans, Mongolians, and to some extent Malays, Lawrence concludes:

> In the most authentic descriptions, we everywhere find proofs of astonishing insensibility to the pains and joys of others, even their nearest relations; inflexible cruelty, selfishness, and disposition to cheat; a want of all sympathetic impulses and feelings; the most brutal apathy and indolence, unless roused by the pressure of actual physical want, or stimulated by the desire of revenge and the thirst of blood. Their barbarous treatment of women, the indiscriminate and unrelenting destruction of their warfare, the infernal torments inflicted on their captives, and the horrible practice of cannibalism, fill the friend of humanity by turns with pity, indignation, and horror. (411)

Lawrence also explains, though, that there are examples to counter such a "dismal picture" of the darker races because although he believes the darker races to be intellectually inferior, many do "display an openness of heart, a friendly and generous disposition, the greatest hospitality, and an observance of the point of honor according

their own notions" (Lawrence 411). Native Americans and even slaves, Lawrence continues, possess many positive qualities, such as loyalty, bravery, and kindheartedness. However, Lawrence explains that "[t]he Mongolian people differ very much" especially when compared to Americans, "in their docility and moral character"; even though there is evidence that "this race is susceptible of civilisation [sic], and of great advancement in the useful and even elegant arts of life," when Mongolian tribes are "united under one leader," such as Attila, Genghis Khan, and Tamerlane, they have brought about "war and desolation," as well as "[u]nrelenting slaughter, without distinction of condition, age, or sex, and universal destruction . . . unmingled with any acts of generosity, and kindness to the vanquished, or the slightest symptoms of regard to the rights and liberties of mankind" (Lawrence 414-415). Lawrence concludes that darker skin equates to lower intelligence. Therefore, Asians, with their lighter skin, are highly intelligent but potentially quite dangerous. By the early nineteenth century, Blumenbach's and Lawrence's beliefs regarding racial 'Others' as intellectually inferior, morally depraved, and prone to violence, were prevalent throughout Europe, and although such claims about race are now largely panned as pseudoscience, the work of Blumenbach, Lawrence, and others was, at the time, accepted as scientifically-supported fact.

Lawrence was also particularly concerned about the mixing of races. He defines several different classes of mixed-race children. Among the possible combinations of first-generation mixed offspring are mestizo, the offspring of European and Native American, and mulatto, the offspring of European and African, though he classifies second- and third- generations differently (Lawrence 156-58). In any case, Lawrence views the mixing of European blood with any other race as a contamination:

> The dark races and all who are contaminated by any visible mixture of dark blood, are comprised under the general denomination of people of color. It is not, however, merely by this superficial character that they are distinguished; all other physical and moral qualities are equally influenced by those of the parents. The intellectual and moral character of the Europeans is deteriorated by the mixture of black or red blood; while, on the other hand, an infusion of white blood tends in an equal degree to improve and ennoble the qualities of the dark varieties. (Lawrence 160)

Lawrence suggests that the only way to remove the contamination of interbreeding between races is to dilute the contamination over many generations, though he suggests that the effects of the contamination are never fully reconciled. This idea of contamination is especially prevalent in a colonized world that allows, for the first time, opportunities for regular interaction between people of different ethnic origins. However, contrary to the later one-drop rule that determines one drop of African blood makes a person black, Lawrence believed that the 'impurity' could be diluted to the point of irrelevance by the fifth generation, or Quinterin, as seen in Figure 1.

Parents.	*Offspring.*	*Degree of Mixture.*	
Negro and European.....	Mulatto.....	$\frac{1}{2}$ white	$\frac{1}{2}$ black.
European and Mulatto.....	Terceron.....	$\frac{3}{4}$ ——	$\frac{1}{4}$ ——
Negro and Mulatto.....	Griffo, or Zambo...	$\frac{3}{4}$ black	$\frac{1}{4}$ white.
European and Terceron....	Quarteron.....	$\frac{7}{8}$ white	$\frac{1}{8}$ black.
Negro and Terceron.....	....	$\frac{7}{8}$ black	$\frac{1}{8}$ white.
European and Quarteron...	Quinterin.....	$\frac{15}{16}$ white	$\frac{1}{16}$ black.
Negro and Quarteron.....	....	$\frac{15}{16}$ black	$\frac{1}{16}$ white.

The two latter are respectively white and black; and of these, the first are white by law, and consequently free, in our West-India Islands. All remains of color are so completely banished, that they are not distinguishable from whites in any respect.

Figure 1. William Lawrence, *Lectures on Physiology, Zoology, and the Natural History of Man*, p. 299

Lawrence's efforts to attach moral characteristics to Blumenbach's race classifications have a detrimental effect on how white Europeans view the potential of intermarriage and procreation. In *Youth and Empire: Trans-Colonial Childhoods in British and French Asia*, David Pomfret explains that mixed race children were quite common in colonized areas, but they posed a new problem. Some argued that mixed-race children were especially vulnerable and potentially left with "an ambiguous social status" while others believed that "racial difference could be encoded and challenges to the colonial order resolved"; however, any attempts to reconcile the problem "rarely prevented those living across the colour line from experiencing ostracisation" (Pomfret 243-44). The mixing of races is particularly threatening to the notions of Empire. Mixed-race children in British and French Asia, classified as Eurasians, were treated as a separate class because their hybridity made them neither fully European nor fully Asian. The same is true for mulattoes, creoles, and other hybrid groups in other colonized countries and in areas with high populations of enslaved Africans. Mixed-race (or the more objectionable term, 'mixed-blood') children are consistently viewed as inferior at best and inhuman at worst. No rule illustrates that more clearly than the one-drop rule, "the idea that anyone with any African 'blood' is legally black" (Sharfstein 593). The idea of the purity and superiority of white European blood established by the race science of Blumenbach and Lawrence is, by the early nineteenth century, deeply ingrained into the social consciousness of white Europeans.

Into this world are born Frankenstein's Creature, Bertha Mason, and Heathcliff, three characters that function as racial 'Others' within their respective novels, *Frankenstein*, *Jane Eyre*, and *Wuthering Heights*. Many theorists have explored some of

the facets of race in these novels, including those who strive to establish these characters as racial 'Others,' those who seek to explore the effects of the characters' Otherness, and those who are interested in the social or psychological ramifications of racial Otherness. This thesis is interested in expanding on existing research and exploring the various ways that race is depicted in the literature of the nineteenth century as well as the enduring stereotypes that continue to shape the way Western cultures view racial 'Others,' both culturally and artistically.

Race in the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries

Although the three nineteenth-century characters reflect the racial stereotypes of their time, those stereotypes extend into the twentieth and twenty-first centuries as well, as do the perceptions of these characters by twentieth- and twenty-first-century readers. The book *The Immigrant Other*, a collection of essays regarding the immigrant experience, explores the various ways that the appearance of evil is associated with both Latinx migrant workers, brown-skinned asylum seekers, and most significantly, Muslim men. Loaded phrases like 'illegal alien' and 'radical Islamic terrorist,' which are explicitly connected to a brown-skinned 'Other,' only serve to further cement the connection between appearance and monstrosity; furthermore, "various policies and practices associated with the criminalization of immigration situate undocumented immigrants (and documented immigrants and citizens) as threatening 'Others'" (Epps et al. 4). Problematic immigrants are almost always racial 'Others' in Western countries: from the stereotyping of undocumented workers stealing American jobs to the fear of terrorists posing as Syrian refugees throughout Europe, the brown-skinned immigrant, or *brown peril*, Epps and his colleagues argue, is the new monster threatening American and

European safety. Similarly, Frankenstein's Creature, Bertha Mason, and Heathcliff potentially function as threatening racial 'Others' who threaten to upend cultural norms with their 'Otherness.'

More than a century after figures like Blumenbach and Lawrence quantified the physical and moral characteristics of racial 'Others' and established enduring racial stereotypes, W. E. B. Du Bois began grappling with the long-term effects of racism and arguing that racism underpinned many of the social, economic, and political problems experienced by African Americans in post-Civil War, pre-Civil Rights America. Among Du Bois writings is his meditation on "double-consciousness" in which he explains that:

> the Negro is a sort of seventh son, born with a veil, and gifted with second-sight in this American world—a world which yields him no true self-consciousness but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his twoness—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, which dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder. (Du Bois 9)

Though Du Bois is speaking directly to the experience of African Americans living in a country that has replaced slavery with segregation, his idea of double-consciousness applies to racial 'Others' throughout Europe and America in the twenty-first century. His image of a person "always looking at one's self through the eyes of others" can just as easily be applied to many racial 'Others' in America and Western Europe.

Some scientific studies, even through the late twentieth century, continue to reinforce race stereotypes. *The Bell Curve*, a controversial study by Richard Herrnstein and Charles Murray attempted to confirm the link between race and intelligence, concluding that "[d]espite the forbidding air that envelops the topic, ethnic differences in cognitive ability are neither surprising nor in doubt" (269). Their research argues that African-Americans are genetically inclined to lower IQs than other races; because they are intellectually inferior, Herrnstein and Murray argue, any efforts to provide equal opportunity to education and other resources is futile. Conversely, their research affirms that Asians "probably" have a genetic disposition to higher IQs than whites, but Herrnstein and Murray chose to focus their research more on African-Americans "because it is the most controversial and has the widest social ramifications" (272). At the time of its release, Herrnstein and Murray's efforts were largely attacked and discredited by many academics as well as the press, and their work continues to be referenced by race theorists and social scientists as evidence of the pervasive racism that underpins American culture. Derrick Bell, leading critical race theorist, countered the conclusions of *The Bell Curve*, arguing that Herrnstein and Murray failed to account for "the debilitating effects of discrimination and exclusion on African Americans"; however, even if they had "devised an 'oppression factor'" that could account for the external factors that impact IQ testing data, Bell surmises that if the study concluded that African-Americans actually held a predilection for higher IQs than whites, the result would be "racist outrage" that "would almost certainly throw the country into turmoil" (Bell 894-95). Thus, Bell argues, Herrnstein and Murray presented a study, more

pseudoscience than science, that was safe and marketable despite being filled with theories that have long been rejected.

Murray expressed concern about the implications of publishing his study. In a 1994 *New York Times* interview about the release of *The Bell Curve*, Murray predicted that the book would be publicly challenged but privately supported "[b]ecause a huge number of well-meaning whites fear that they are closet racists, and this book tells them they are not. It's going to make them feel better about things they already think but do not know how to say" (Deparle). To some extent, Murray was right. Despite the criticism that the study received, *The Bell Curve* was "the best-selling nonfiction book" of 1994 (Margulies 66). The dual beliefs held by whites, as evidenced by the commercial success of *The Bell Curve* despite public outrage, confirms a much deeper cultural conflict:

> A public commitment to the idea that people ought not to be judged by the color of their skin exists alongside a widely held private belief that racial and ethnic differences are not only deep and wide, but a perfectly sensible way to distinguish one group from another. The powerful stigma against giving voice to overtly racist sentiments is matched by an equally powerful conviction on the part of a great many people that racial differences are genuine and should be taken into account by policy makers. (Margulies 66-67)[2]

Race is an issue with which American and European cultures continue to struggle and grapple: at times seeming to make significant progress toward a utopian-like, post-racial

[2] In *What Changed When Everything Changed: 9/11 and the Making of National Identity*, Margulies explores how the singular event of the 9/11 attacks impacted America, particularly race relations in America; however, his research is certainly applicable to European countries, like Spain, France, and Great Britain, that have experienced devastating terrorist attacks in the past 20 years. The issue of terrorism provides the most recent fuel for racist policies as racial 'Others' continue to be discriminated against throughout America and Europe.

world; at others, backsliding into the racial divides that defined the past. The twentieth century saw the Holocaust and Jim Crow, but also the Civil Rights Movement. Likewise, the twenty-first century is witnessing the mass incarceration of African Americans and growing border crises as Western countries attempt to curb immigration, but also the Black Lives Matter movement and the rise of sanctuary cities. American and European cultures continue to oscillate between contrasting impulses, a constant push-and-pull between embracing diversity and promoting national pride, between personal freedoms and public safety.

No issue has so dominated the battle between these two contrasting urges than the rise of global terrorism. As is often the case, fear fuels backsliding: 9/11 in America, the train bombings in Madrid Spain in 2004, and the London bombings in 2005 all led to policies that are on their surface intended to protect citizens but which actually open the door for racial profiling and a resurgence of white nationalism (Margulies). Following 9/11, America raced headfirst into one war, and then another, while domestic policies like the PATRIOT Act and the formation of the Department of Homeland Security reshaped American foreign policy. This is a "punitive turn," according to Margulies, which is a recurrent trend throughout American history, a key feature of which includes "the repeated creation of mythical monsters whose apocalyptic threat requires expanding the federal enforcement power," which is "justified in the creedal language of community welfare and individual responsibility" (Margulies 98). Though certainly not the first punitive turn in history, 9/11 serves as a major punitive turn for people who are or appear to be of Middle Eastern descent as well as people who are or appear to be Muslim.

Following 9/11, Arab Americans and Muslim Americans gained national attention as the American public sought to acquaint itself with a culture and a religion it had long ignored in an attempt to mentally process and understand the tragedy. Arab Americans, Muslim Americans, and anyone appearing to fit into either category are, in the aftermath of 9/11, thrust into an unwanted spotlight, and "accused of dual sympathies" while feeling as if they are simultaneously "removed (of their own accord) from the Middle East, but equally removed (not of their own accord) from the United States" (Salaita 153). In "Global Terror and the Rise of Xenophobia/Islamophobia," Muhammad Safeer Awan outlines the impact of stereotyping in the media and popular culture following 9/11. Awan argues that "[t]he vilification of the Muslim community and their faith has been relentless among certain segments of the media" and across political discourse, leading to a "campaign of demonizing Islam as a faith and Muslims as a community" (Awan 525). Awan also notes that the "increase in xenophobic feelings in the US" is noteworthy because "such hatred [is] essentially considered as patriotism" (Awan 526). Salaita calls this type of patriotism "imperative patriotism," which "assumes (or demands) that dissent in matters of governance and foreign affairs is unpatriotic and therefore unsavory"; this type of patriotism "manifests itself most explicitly during wartime or domestic unrest" (Salaita 154). Imperative patriotism also suggests a subtle definition of what an American or the 'American Way of Life' is supposed to look like, and at least "at the popular level, it is assumed that a 'true' American is (or should be) patriotic and capitalistic, and, less explicitly, Christian and White" (Salaita 156). Other Europeans countries, following their own experiences with terrorism, have also enacted new policies designed to keep these monstrous 'Others' from threatening their country.

The most recent such policy is Brexit, the British referendum on their membership in the European Union that seeks to secure their borders from the infiltration of unwanted immigrants that are able to freely move throughout Europe.

Thus, Lawrence's efforts to associate appearance with moral characteristics continues: anyone who is or appears to be from a Middle Eastern country must be a terrorist; anyone who is or appears to be from Latin America must be an illegal immigrant intent on invading America; anyone who is or appears to be a refugee from a war-torn country is likely to be a terrorist in refugee's clothing; anyone who is black and male poses a likely threat to anyone who is white and female. By continuing to associate the physical appearance of racial 'Others' with negative moral characteristics—terrorism, rape, murder, invasion—white Americans and Europeans continue to fuel the stereotypes created by flawed science.

A Monster, a Madwoman, and a Gypsy Devil

These stereotypes permeate literature, too. The work of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century scientists to classify race find their way into such works as *Frankenstein*, *Jane Eyre*, and *Wuthering Heights*, three novels that feature characters that can be classified as racial 'Others.' Characters like Frankenstein's Creature, Bertha Mason, and Heathcliff are so compelling that we continue to revisit them and reexamine their roles as racial 'Others' within their respective novels.

Frankenstein's Creature has long been identified by critics, including H.L. Malchow, David A. Hedrich Hirsch, Anne Mellor, and Karen Piper, as representing racial 'Otherness,' though some debate remains as to which race the Creature represents.

Malchow[3] argues that Frankenstein's monster embodies the fears and stereotypes surrounding race in nineteenth-century Britain, a world in which "negative stereotyping . . . of the dark 'Other'" was well-established; however, he notes that "towards the turn of the century ideas about racial difference were consolidated and intensified," leading to a correlation between race and the terrifying, beastly 'Other' (Malchow 94). Hirsch[4] connects the descriptions of Frankenstein's monster to the images "commonly encountered in colonial depictions of Asian, Indian, and African 'savages'" (Hirsch 118); Mellor[5] concludes that "Mary Shelley's nineteenth-century readers would immediately have recognized the Creature as a member of the Mongolian race" (Mellor 2-3); and most recently, Piper[6] has argued that the Creature is Inuit, an "inhabitant of the North" who serves as both a fascination and a threat to English society (Piper 63). The threat of the Creature, from the first moment he opens his "dull yellow eye," is inextricably linked to his hideous appearance, and from the descriptions of his appearance, Shelley establishes the Creature quite clearly as a racial 'Other.' Whether African or Mongolian or some other hybrid being, the Creature essentially represents the bogeyman of the day,

[3] In "Frankenstein's Monster and Images of Race in Nineteenth-Century Britain," Malchow argues that the descriptions of Frankenstein's monster are reflective of nineteenth-century attitudes and beliefs toward enslaved Africans: size, athletic ability, endurance, dangerous sexuality, and capacity for vengeance.

[4] Hirsch is less concerned about determining the race of the Creature in his essay, "Liberty, Equality, and Monstrosity: Revolutionizing the Family in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*," and instead only addresses the colonial-era depictions of racial 'Others' that Europeans would encounter in colonized areas within larger conversation of politics, family structures, and how we perceive sameness and difference.

[5] Mellor's meticulous study, "*Frankenstein*, Racial Science, and the Yellow Peril," strives to identify Frankenstein's Creature as fitting the racial category of Mongolian as defined by Blumenbach, Lawrence, and others. She also traces how these scientists would have influenced Mary Shelley, particularly Lawrence who was a personal friend of Percy and Mary Shelley.

[6] In "Inuit Diasporas: *Frankenstein* and the Inuit in England," Piper counters Mellor's claim that the Creature's yellow skin equates to the Mongolian race because yellow skin is also associated with Samis. Therefore, she argues, "the creature's identity is much more clearly linked to discourses surrounding the 'problem' of indigeneity and European 'discovery,' primarily in the Arctic and the Americas, than to the discourse of Orientalism (64).

encapsulating every fear that nineteenth-century Europeans have regarding the fearsome, dark 'Other.' That fear endures because we, as humans, are always looking for the next monster around the corner, the unknown 'Other' who might destroy all we hold dear.

Likewise, many critics, including Susan Meyer, Sue Thomas, and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, have noted that Bertha Mason is presented as a racial 'Other' in *Jane Eyre*.[7] Like Frankenstein's Creature, Bertha's racial identification is somewhat ambiguous by nineteenth-century scientific (or pseudoscientific) standards of racial classification. In "The Tropical Extravagance of Bertha Mason," Sue Thomas explores the original meaning of the term 'Creole,' and concludes that there were four possible definitions in use in nineteenth-century Britain: "white people of Spanish descent naturalized by birth in Spanish America; people of non-aboriginal descent naturalized by birth in the West Indies; non-aboriginal people 'of different colours' (white or 'negro') born in Spanish America . . . ; and white people of European descent naturalized by birth in the West Indies" (Thomas 2). Lawrence weighs in on this topic as well, noting that the term *Creole* is often confused with the term *Mulatt*o (255); however, the etymology of the word suggests that the term has multiple possible origins and is originally more focused on place of birth than race (OED). Creoles could be white, black, or mixed race individuals born in the East or West Indies. Bertha Mason, then, possesses an ambiguous racial origin, but she is clearly defined as a mix of European and Creole. Jane describes Bertha's face as "[f]earful and ghastly," "a discoloured…savage face" with a "fearful

[7] Other critics who have explore the issue of race in *Jane Eyre* include Patricia McKee, who is mostly concerned with intentional ambiguity of race in the novel and how it reflects Victorian ideals in "Racial Strategies in *Jane Eyre*"; and Joyce Zonana, who addresses Jane's compulsion to save the man rather than the enslaved woman in "The Sultan and the Slave: Feminist Orientalism and the Structures of *Jane Eyre*"; Tracy Thomas, "'Reader, I Buried Him': Apocalypse and Empire in *Jane Eyre*"; and Trevor Hope, "Revisiting the Imperial Archive: 'Jane Eyre,' 'Wide Sargasso Sea,' and the Decomposition of Englishness."

blackened inflation of the lineaments" (Brontë 254). Because Bertha is described as having black hair and a "swarthy" complexion, both of which play into racial stereotypes, she becomes, according to Spivak, "a figure produced by the axiomatics of imperialism" (247). Despite the ambiguity of her race, all of Bertha's negative behaviors are inherited from her mother, from the Creole. No matter the racial origin, *Creole* is clearly a negative marker inherited from the mother, a code that signifies 'Otherness'; therefore, *Creole* becomes a stand-in for any kind of muddled impurity that sullies the preferable whiteness associated with Englishness. The significance of Bertha's Creole heritage is in establishing her as not English and, as a result, impure, dangerous, villainous.

Bertha's sexuality also plays a key role in making her a threatening figure, and seen as a symptom of her madness, just as much of a threat as her race. In *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution 1770-1823*, David Brion Davis notes that "the godless character of West Indian society made it easy to perceive slavery as a product of irregulation and infidelity, closely linked to the sins of intemperance, profanity, and shameless sexuality" (203). Bertha embodies all of those traits, and because she is part of West Indian society, that depravity is, according to Davis, deeply ingrained. Ward notes that understanding contemporary views of Bertha's Creole origins is essential to understanding her character: "Bertha's madness is not a result of racial, but of sexual inheritance, the result of being the heiress to a family corrupted by the nature of their livelihood" (Ward 19). The belief that children inherit race from their mothers stems from a practice of convenience during the period of African slavery in the Americas through which all children followed the condition of their mothers.[8] Following the logic of the

[8] Beginning with a 1662 Virginia law, all children followed the condition of their mother (Billings 57), which meant that children born to enslaved mothers and fathered by white slave owners remained

pseudoscientific beliefs of the nineteenth century, all of the negative traits associated with 'Otherness' would be inherited along with race. Because Bertha inherits both her race and her negative personality traits from her mother, there is an explicit link between race and sexuality that manifests in insanity; her animalistic nature further weaves together insanity, sexuality, and racial 'Otherness.' Furthermore, because of Bertha's intersectionality as a female racial 'Other,' she is exiled to the shadows of the novel. Both Frankenstein's Creature and Heathcliff are enigmatic characters that dominate their respective novels, and despite their status as fearsome 'Others,' they are given powerful voices, but not so for Bertha. Even though she inspired the title of their seminal feminist work, *Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*, Gilbert and Gubar[9] still relegate Bertha to the role of plot device for the true heroine as Jane overcomes the symbolic "difficulties Everywoman in a patriarchal society must meet and overcome: oppression (at Gateshead), starvation (at Lowood), madness (at Thornfield), and coldness (at Marsh End)" (339). Bertha is presented as not much more than a weak antithesis to Jane; therefore, due to her intersectionality, she is left behind as the female racial 'Other' rather than liberated by the wave of feminism represented by Gilbert and Gubar's work.

The issue of race and ethnicity in *Wuthering Heights* has been addressed by several theorists, and much like the character of Bertha Mason, Heathcliff's race eludes

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enslaved. Ideas of racial purity or impurity begin with the writings of Lawrence, who noted that the impurities of the darker races could be diluted with interbreeding over many generations; he even believed it was possible to remove all of the negative characteristics through interbreeding. Eventually, due in large part to the practice of slavery, the opposite belief takes hold and results in such policies as the one-drop rule, a belief that even one drop of black blood makes a person black (Jordan 251).

[9] No discussion of works by female writers in the 19th century is complete without mentioning Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's work. For the purposes of this research, their work is most relevant to Jane Eyre as part of a discussion of Bertha's intersectionality.

classification and remains, despite the efforts of critics, ambiguous. Abby Bardi[10] explores the Victorian trope of the gypsy, which unsettled social attitudes and threatened property ownership, and addresses the way that Heathcliff's "gypsy" nature emphasizes his alien status in contrast to a civilized Britain, which prohibits him from being a respected landholder. Heathcliff is initially commodified, "[r]escued from the streets of Liverpool, England's foremost slave port" and then "presented to the Earnshaw children as a gift"; later, he "impedes the flow of primogeniture and causes the temporary redistribution of the two properties in the novel" (Bardi 114). Though Bardi situates Heathcliff within the conversation specifically regarding gypsies, the early commodification and later threat that Heathcliff poses is in line with attitudes and beliefs toward any 'dark other' of the nineteenth century. Both Maja-Lisa von Sneidern[11] and Susan Meyer[12] explore the possibility that Heathcliff could be a slave, though not necessarily African, because he is described as dark-skinned and Mr. Earnshaw finds him in Liverpool, the largest slave-trading port in England in the late eighteenth century. Meyer, though, goes beyond race classification and argues that the Cathy-Heathcliff relationship establishes a reciprocal relationship between the oppressed position of women and those of the 'darker races.' Through the Catherine-Heathcliff relationships, Meyer argues that Brontë "explores the nature of forces external to, subordinated to,

[10] "'Gypsies' and Property in British Literature: Orlando and Wuthering Heights" is mostly concerned with establishing and exploring the gypsy trope in Victorian England, including the origins of the term, the stereotypes surrounding gypsies, and the specific laws related to gypsies.

[11] "*Wuthering Heights* and the Liverpool Slave Trade" is an essay that details the evolution of Britain's participation in the slave trade and fact that the character of Heathcliff reflects British anxieties toward racial 'Others.'

[12] "Your Father Was Emperor of China, and Your Mother an Indian Queen: Reverse Imperialism in *Wuthering Heights*" also explores the possible race of Heathcliff, though she posits another possible origin might be "the Indian seamen, termed lascars, recruited by the East India Company to replace members of the British crews who died on exposure or disease in India or in military encounters with the Indians" (98).

marginalized by, or excluded from the British social order" by invoking a "metaphorical link between white women and people of nonwhite races as she explores energies of resistance to the existing social structure" (Meyer 101). As Catherine and Heathcliff are often presented as two parts of the same soul,[13] together they create a metaphorical intersectionality of race and gender as embodied by two people, one non-male and one non-white, who are essentially two parts of the same person.

Frankenstein's Creature, Bertha Mason, and Heathcliff can all be seen as occupying liminal spaces. Liminal figures are unsettling, so it is fitting that these three racial 'Others' that destabilize their cultures, that are racially ambiguous, that are viewed as fearsome and threatening, also occupy various liminal spaces: between life and death, between sanity and insanity, between self and Other. For Heathcliff, however, liminality embodies who he is as a character in a way that goes beyond his role as a racial 'Other.' This idea of liminality is more than just a crossing of thresholds;[14] it is a rupturing of barriers between binary systems: the space between Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange, the space between self and other, the space between life and death, the space between generations, even the space between English and non-English 'Other.' Steven Vine, in "The Wuther of the Other in *Wuthering Heights*," connects the idea of liminality with Otherness and argues that there is no character in *Wuthering Heights* who represents

[13] Catherine famously proclaims, "Nelly, I am Heathcliff! He's always, always in my mind: not as a pleasure, any more than I am always a pleasure to myself, but as my own being. So don't talk of our separation again: it is impracticable" (Brontë 76-77).

[14] In the first part of his essay, "*Wuthering Heights*: the 'initiatory step,'" Mark M. Hennelly discusses the significance of liminal spaces, motifs, and characters in Wuthering Heights as they relate to moments of initiation. Hennelly, in working with Victor Turner's theories regarding liminality, connects the idea of thrashing, the German root of the word threshold which refers to beating grain in order to remove the husk, to "initiatory steps" which involve "the novice in some kind of threshold crossing or entranced entrance into an altered state of semi-consciousness, social statuslessness, and ontological becoming" (97).

liminality more than Heathcliff, a character who occupies a liminal position at Wuthering Heights as he constantly finds himself both within and without.[15] Heathcliff is the primary character in the novel who embodies this level of 'Otherness,' "a passing of boundaries that takes the outside in and the inside out, where the familiar is made strange . . . and the strange comes to inhabit the familiar" (340). As Hennelly argues, "*Wuthering Heights* could be retitled Othering Heights since its brand of liminal alterity repeatedly appears in its 'wuthering' nature and truthful 'slant' (99). Heathcliff's liminality, however, extends beyond his 'Otherness' within his adopted family. Vine notes that Heathcliff's "entire history in the novel is framed in terms of *taking the place of others*" (342). Mr. Earnshaw gives Heathcliff "the name of a son who died in childhood" and he quickly takes the place of Hindley as Mr. Earnshaw's favorite (Brontë 34). He eventually takes Hindley's place as master of Wuthering Heights and Edgar's place as master of Thrushcross Grange. However, Heathcliff does more than take the literal places of other characters; he also symbolically replaces other characters, "grotesquely repeating or exaggerating the characteristics of those he ousts" (Vine 342). As a racial 'Other,' Heathcliff embodies difference. He exists in a word that cannot accept him, that does not understand him, that refuses to embrace him. His liminal place in the world figuratively encompasses W.E.B. Du Bois' concept of *double consciousness*. Heathcliff is both within and without, a part of the Earnshaw and Linton families in a literal sense and the undeniable outsider in every way that matters to him.

The hybridity of both Frankenstein's Creature and Bertha Mason are central to the way they are viewed as a threat to Western culture. Historian Ann Stoler, in "Sexual

[15] Vine is particularly concerned with the idea of wuthering, which he determines "names 'a quivering movement' or 'a tremble' that convulses from within rather than attacks from without" (340).

Affronts and Racial Frontiers," argues that interracial unions were seen as one of the greatest threats in colonial Southeast Asia," as well as other colonial holdings: "Mixed-race children, cultural hybridities, were viewed as particularly destabilizing and threatening to cultural and national identity" (Stoler, "Sexual Affronts" 344). In another piece exploring race, Stoler addresses the idea of contagion that is associated with preserving racial purity: "notions of racial contagion rested on two competing truth claims: (1) on the premise of discrete categories of people, and (2) on the premise that those allegedly discrete categories could be irremediably 'sullied' through sexual, moral and affective contact and fundamentally transformed" (Stoler, "Racial Histories" 199). Cultural, ethnic, and racial hybrids are also threatening to the dominant race in a colonial setting. This is true in slaveholding states, where laws mandated that mulatto children of enslaved women remain enslaved, and it is also true in colonized countries like India in which a white European identity equates power. Therefore, the exact race of the Creature and Bertha are less significant than the fact that they are hybrids, a mix of races that threaten pure Englishness. Unlike the Creature and Bertha Mason, Heathcliff is not clearly defined as a hybrid; however, he possesses a similar threat in his failed attempt to marry Catherine and his successful marriage (if we can call their marriage successful) to Isabella, which results in a hybrid offspring, Linton Heathcliff. He is the dark-skinned 'Other' who defiles the pure white woman, confirming with his violent sexuality all of the stereotypical fears regarding dark men threatening white women. Furthermore, Heathcliff uses his hybrid son to unseat the proper inheritance of property. Because hybrids are viewed as racially impure and threatening to the power structure, these villainous hybrids embody all that white English society fear in the dark 'Other.'

Frankenstein's Monster

In Chapter 2, "'A Race of Devils': Frankenstein's Monster and the Irrational Fear of the Racial Other," I theorize that the monstrosity of Victor Frankenstein's creation in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* is a manifestation of the irrational fears associated with racial 'Others'; furthermore, such fears permeate Western associations of migrants, immigrants, and refugees as uncontrollable, monstrous 'Others' that, like Frankenstein's Creature, are determined to destroy civilized Western culture. Frankenstein's Creature embodies all of the fears of various racial 'Others' detailed by Blumenbach and Lawrence, comprised into one terrifying, hideous being. He is a hybrid being after all, perhaps much more terrifying than any one racial 'Other' could be. The Creature embodies every fear, every stereotype, every threat that a monstrous 'Other' possesses, and Victor Frankenstein's disgust for the Creature is partly rooted in the fact that he does not fit into the clear racial categories that allow for easy classification. The Creature's hybridity is the real threat.[16] Additionally, I will theorize that Frankenstein's Creature, when viewed from a twenty-first-century lens, can be viewed as an unwanted migrant or refugee. In the psyche of twenty-first-century Europe and America, the bogeyman, the terrifying creature out to steal, kill, and destroy, is more likely to have brown skin than the yellow skin of the Creature. While we may not fully understand the irrational fear toward an enslaved African or yellow-skinned Mongol, twenty-first-century readers in Europe and America certainly recognize the fear of a brown-skinned 'Other' that threatens to destroy Western culture. The monster, in a sense, is an unwanted immigrant,

[16] This is doubly true of the female monster. The "race of devils" (Shelley 144) that gives title to this chapter is in reference to the possibility of procreation that may become possible if Victor creates a female monster.

an alien thing that is unwelcome, that must be controlled and eventually eradicated from civilized society.

Bertha, the Creole Madwoman

In Chapter 3, "'Fearful and Ghastly': Bertha Mason and the Intersection of Race and Gender," I argue that, despite Jane's place as the heroine of the novel, one of the most compelling characters is Rochester's first wife, Bertha Mason, who does not merely function as a foil to Jane, but instead emerges from the ashes as a heroine in her own right, a figure who is misunderstood by a culture that cannot process her intersectionality as both racial 'Other' and powerful, sexual woman. Bertha's intersectionality as both female and a possible racial hybrid make her a compelling figure, even if her existence and the colonial undertones of the novel only serve the purpose of metaphorical representation of social issues in Victorian Britain. Though she has long been viewed as a foil to Jane, the circumstances of her illness, her rejection, her imprisonment, and even her final act of suicide, make her heroic. Bertha breaks free from the constraints, both physical and mental, and takes control of her own fate. She is a fighter who refuses to submit to the will of the man who seeks to control her. She may be doomed, but in her final blaze of glory, she serves as a warning, both to the men who might seek to cage a Bertha Mason and to the women who might one day become her.

Heathcliff, the Gypsy Devil

In Chapter 3, "'A Dark-Skinned Gipsy': The Psychological Effects of Childhood Trauma and Racism in *Wuthering Heights*," I argue that Heathcliff, as a colonized racial 'Other,' ultimately embraces his role as a destructive force and reinvents himself as the colonizer. Because of his Otherness, Heathcliff is never able to assimilate into a culture

that views him as 'Other,' so he instead morphs into the devil that everyone, excepting Cathy, assumes him to be. Similar to Frankenstein's Creature, Heathcliff occupies a liminal space as he remains on the fringe of society. Heathcliff enters Wuthering Heights as an orphaned child adopted by Mr. Earnshaw, which serves as a rupture in the family structure, and he is initially rejected by all other members of the household.[17] He is immediately established as some type of racial 'Other' in the descriptions of his appearance and mannerisms. In this moment, though, he is simultaneously Earnshaw's son and an outsider in the Earnshaw house, a status that he will maintain as he occupies dual roles throughout his childhood: favorite and foreigner, loved and hated, brother and Other.[18] Because of his liminal position at Wuthering Heights, Heathcliff's very presence disrupts and disorders the culture of the household, and because of this, he can never fully find stability in any role that he assumes. As a child Heathcliff suffers a string of abuses: first as an orphaned or abandoned child, then as the target of racial discrimination, then as the victim of domestic abuse at the hands of his adoptive brother, and finally as one rejected by the only person with whom he claims identity. In supplanting Hindley as master of Wuthering Heights, he simultaneously defeats and mirrors the violence he suffered under Hindley's rule, projecting his own rage against Hindley onto Hindley's son Hareton, and effectively becoming Hareton's oppressor in the same way that Hindley was Heathcliff's oppressor. The colonized becomes the colonizer; the terrorized becomes the terrorist.

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[17] The initial reactions of the family include his adopted mother who calls him a "gipsy brat" and is "ready to fling [him] out of doors"; his adopted siblings who "refused to have it in bed with them, or even in their room"; and even Nelly, the most maternal character in the novel, is "frightened" by the "dirty, ragged, black-haired child" and "put him on the landing stairs, hoping it might be gone on the morrow" (33-34).

[18] In this sense, Heathcliff might be what Julia Kristeva calls a borderline patient who "collapse[s] . . . the border between inside and outside" (Kristeva 53).

A Legacy of Otherness

The final chapter will explore the legacy of the three nineteenth-century characters that each function as racial 'Others': the Creature, Bertha Mason, and Heathcliff. Each of these characters have inspired later writers to return to them, reexamine them, reimagine them and their stories through twentieth- and twenty-first-century contexts. I will first explore various iterations of Frankenstein's Creature as he is portrayed on stage and in film, and then shift to the most recent example of how he has been reimagined within the context of the Black Lives Matter movement in Victor LaValle's *Destroyer* comic series.[19] Then, I will take a look at how Jean Rhys' novel *Wide Sargasso Sea*,[20] along with the rise of feminist criticism in the middle- and late-twentieth century, has inspired new interpretations of Bertha Mason as a feminist, anti-colonial heroine. Finally, I will delve into Maryse Condé's *Windward Heights*,[21] a reimagined version of *Wuthering Heights* set on the Caribbean island of Guadeloupe. The three nineteenth-century novels that comprise the primary focus of this thesis each present characters that reflect nineteenth-century beliefs about racial 'Others'; yet, these characters are more than just flat stereotypes or mere caricature. Instead, they are so complex, so compelling, so nuanced, that they demand reinterpretation. The three twentieth/twenty-first century reimaginings of these characters—a prequel, a sequel, and a remake—are compelling enough individually to demand close study of the way

[19] This is a relatively new (2017) six-part comic series that uses the *Frankenstein* mythology as its foundation. The last descendant of the Frankenstein family, Josephine Baker, loses her son in a police shooting, which modernizes *Frankenstein* in terms of the Black Lives Matter movement.

[20] Rhys' novel is the most well-known of the three 20th/21st-century texts detailed in this chapter, and much criticism has already explored the novel's impact; however, no discussion of *Jane Eyre* in the 20th- and 21st-century is complete without discussing *Wide Sargasso Sea*.

[21] Condé's novel is a retelling of *Wuthering Heights*, in which the primary characters are Razyé, an abandoned African child, and Cathy, the mixed-race daughter of the man who adopts Razyé and brings him into the family. The other two texts are a prequel (*Wide Sargasso Sea*) and sequel (*Destroyer*).

LaValle, Rhys, and Condé address issues of race and gender in their own time by reinterpreting nineteenth-century characters. Together, these three texts extend the discussion on how nineteenth-century attitudes toward race and empire continue to impact discourse and attitudes regarding otherness in the twenty-first-century.

CHAPTER II

'A Race of Devils': Frankenstein's Monster and the Irrational Fear of the Other

On June 23, 2016, voters across the United Kingdom cast their ballots on the EU membership referendum, also known as Brexit, with a majority of voters supporting an exit from the European Union. Almost immediately, news organizations like the *BBC* and *The Guardian* began speculating that the voter results were not merely rooted in economic frustrations but were instead a result of xenophobic fears related to unregulated immigration.[22] Across the pond, at almost the same time, voters in Middle America were packing then-candidate Donald Trump's campaign rallies and chanting "Build the Wall!" The same fears that fueled the Brexit vote were also central to the 2016 American election: a nameless, faceless, brown-skinned 'Other'[23] who, if entering Western countries unchecked and unregulated, will bring about destruction and violence, will steal jobs from more deserving citizens, will alter the cultural landscape and change everything we value. This fear of a racial or cultural 'Other,' of course, is not new. The race science of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, which codified race as we understand it today, established the pervasive stereotypes of the fearsome, dark 'Other.' The monstrosity of Victor Frankenstein's creation in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* is a sort of manifestation of those same irrational fears associated with racial 'Others'; furthermore, such fears continue to permeate Western associations of migrants, immigrants, and refugees as

[22] The *BBC* cites the fact that "Farage makes immigration the defining issue" as one of the top reasons that the Brexit vote passes. Similarly, *The Guardian* quotes Pat McFadden, who explains that "immigration is very high on [the] list of concerns" (qtd. in Asthana).

[23] The term 'Other' is used here to describe a person who is removed from the subject position, which is usually occupied by someone who is European and male. This essay is primarily concerned with 'Othering' as a result of racial difference, as discussed by theorists Homi K. Bhabha and Edward Said.

uncontrollable, monstrous 'Others' that, like Frankenstein's monster, are determined to destroy civilized Western culture.

Race Science in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries

Frankenstin's Creature is born into a world that had been grappling with the idea of race for almost a century as the Age of Enlightenment sparked new interest in expanding on pre-existing beliefs about the idea of difference among people.[24] Such concepts as the Chain of Being, which established an ordered hierarchy of all things, greatly influenced Western thought regarding mankind's place in the universe.[25] The initial concept places mankind as the highest-ranked being on Earth, situated just below the angels in the chain. Humankind is eventually ordered on the Chain as well, with Kings and Queens occupying the highest place and peasants the lowest. The Chain of Being concept was widely used and adapted throughout the Middle ages, the Renaissance, and into the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries so that by the time zoologist Carolus Linnaeus began classifying plants and animals, the concept was ubiquitous throughout the Western world. Linnaeus' efforts in 1735 to create a hierarchy among all living things represents a more scientific approach to the Chain of Being concept.

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[24] Prior to Enlightenment efforts to define race, any racial difference was largely connected to religious difference. The light/dark imagery that associates light with good and dark with evil extends to skin color in Medieval literature, namely *King of Tars*. Shakespeare plays on that idea in *Othello* but subverts the stereotype by introducing Othello as a "noble" Moor, the opposite of what Shakespeare's audience would expect from a dark skinned man.

[25] Arthur Lovejoy's *The Great Chain of Being: A Study of the History of an Idea*, traces the concept of the Chain of Being from Plato and Aristotle to the Neoplatonists and through the eighteenth century. He cites Plotinus as the first to establish a clear hierarchy that becomes the Great Chain of Being, and explains that Plotinus based his concepts on the writings of Plato and Aristotle. Lovejoy also notes that Linnaeus' *Systema Naturae* had roots in the 'Chain of Being' beliefs of the time period.

Classification is, for Linnaeus, the very foundation of science. In his tenth observation of the first section of *Systema Naturae*, "Observations on the Three Kingdoms of Nature," Linnaeus explains that:

> The first step in wisdom is to know the things themselves; this notion consists in having a true idea of the objects; objects are distinguished and known by classifying them methodically and giving them appropriate names. Therefore, classification and name-giving will be the foundation of our science. (Linnaeus 19)

Although Linnaeus is primarily focused on zoological studies, his work is quickly exploited and used as justification by slave traders, and several of his observations establish the groundwork for scientific racism. In observations three and four of the same section, Linnaeus claims that there are no new species because just as generations can be multiplied forward indefinitely, they can also be counted backwards to "one single *parent*, whether that parent consists of *one single* hermaphrodite (as commonly in plants) or of a double, viz. a male and a female, (as in most animals)," and since there are no new species, he concludes that "like always gives birth to like" (Linnaeus 18). Interestingly, he also has a section of observations on monsters or paradoxes of nature, which include mythological hybrid creatures like the Hydra and the Satyr. Though Linnaeus is specifically discussing the three classifications of minerals, vegetables, and animals in his document, he opens the door for later scientists like Blumenbach to apply his theories to humans. His conclusion that "like always gives birth to like" also fuels debate between polygenists and monogenists. Polygenists believed that different races of humans developed independently and could be ordered hierarchically on the Chain of Being with

Africans representing a 'missing link' between apes and humans. Monogenists, however, followed the Christian belief that all humans share a common ancestry (Adam and Eve) and argued that variations in the different 'tribes' of humans was a result of environmental factors.

Blumenbach,[26] an ardent monogenist, is largely credited with establishing race scientifically, though his work is largely classified as pseudoscience by twenty-first-century standards. Blumenbach initially establishes four race classifications: Caucasian, Mongolian, Ethiopian, and American. However, his work evolves over time, and later publications add a fifth race, the Malay. Blumenbach begins his treatise on race by discussing variations in the animal world as a result of climate, environment, and hybridity.[27] For example, the ideal climate is European, and Blumenbach argues that living in a warmer or cooler climate results in inherent changes to the inhabitants of those climates, which includes changes to appearance and temperament. Hybridity, Blumenbach argues, is particularly problematic for any species, but there are three cases worth noting: "First, the mere copulation of different animals; secondly, the birth of offspring from such copulation; and thirdly, the fertility of such offspring and their capacity for propagation" (*Anthropological Treatises* 73). Blumenbach concludes that hybrids are the ultimate degenerates, which is why he states that many hybrids, like the mule, are infertile—nature's way of ensuring that hybrids do not disrupt the natural order.

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[26] Blumenbach's most famous work on race is *On the Natural Varieties of Man*, which is included in the collection titled *The Anthropological Treatises of Johann Friedrich Blumenbach*, but he wrote many anthropological treatises, including *Elements of Physiology* and *The Institutions of Physiology*. Blumenbach is a key figure of race pseudoscience, sometimes called scientific racism, that establishes race stereotypes.

[27] In this section, Blumenbach is largely focused on animals. All of his examples of degeneration and the effects of such external forces as climate are applied to animals. However, this serves as a foundation for his later discussion of humans.

He also concludes that human hybrids, attempts to mate humans with brute animals, are most likely impossible because "it seems extremely likely that the Supreme Being foresaw these disgusting kind of unions and took care to render them futile"; therefore, he finds that "such a monstrous connexion has any where ever been fruitful there is no well-established instance to prove" (*Anthropological Treatises* 80-81). Blumenbach discusses and establishes these boundaries in the animal world before he begins defining humans as distinct and separate beings from animals, but all of the conclusions that he makes about animals are also applied to humans in his writings.

In addition to establishing five races, Blumenbach's key contribution is associating physical characteristics that define race. Blumenbach argues that blackness is a result of "climate, and the influence of the soil, and the temperature, together with the mode of life" (*Anthropological Treatises* 107). Conversely, skin color transitions "from the pure white skin of the German lady through the yellow, the red, and the dark nations, to the Ethiopian of the very deepest black . . . in the space of a few degrees of latitude" (107). According to Blumenbach, skin color is the primary marker of difference between races, but he also evaluates hair texture, skull shape, and body form to establish race classifications. In a separate section, Blumenbach discusses the "wild men," who he says are "uncultivated; but hard necessity has so perverted their human nature, that [he] should be inclined to refer these anthropomorphous creatures, who are so like beasts, to the *homines monstrosi*[28] of Linnaeus" (*Anthropological Treatises* 129).

[28] Linnaeus briefly discusses monstrosities in his *Systema Naturae*. Though Linnaeus focuses on mythological monsters, here Blumenbach notes that savages are monstrous and beastlike. Though Blumenbach is clearly separating 'wild men' from Africans, Mongolians, Americans, and Malays, such conclusions about the degenerate nature of the uncivilized supports later colonization arguments about bringing civilization to the uncivilized.

Blumenbach's later work *The Institutions of Physiology*[29] combines and summarizes the findings of his study on race. The Caucasian or European has white skin and red cheeks, which he notes is "almost a peculiarity of this variety"; hair that is "of a nut brown, running on the one hand into yellow and on the other into black, soft, long, and undulating"; a skull that is "extremely symmetrical, rather globular" with cheekbones that are "narrow, not prominent, directed downwards"; a face that is "oval and pretty straight" with a nose that is "narrow and slightly aquiline" and a small mouth and lips (*Institutions* 391). The Mongolian has "skin of an olive colour"; hair that is "black, stiff, straight, and sparing"; a skull that is "almost square" with cheekbones that are "prominent outwards"; a face that is "broad and flattened and its parts consequently less distinct" with a nose that is "small and flat" and "nearly in the same horizontal plane with the malar bones" (392). The Ethiopian has black skin; hair that is "black and crisp"; a skull that is "narrow, compressed laterally" with "the forehead arched; the malar bones projecting forward"; a face that is "narrow and projecting at its lower part" with a nose that is "thick and confused with the projecting cheeks" and thick lips (393). The American has "skin of a copper colour"; hair that is "black, stiff, straight and sparing"; a skull with a short forehead and broad cheekbones "but more arched and rounded than in the Mongolian variety"; a broad face "with prominent cheeks, not flattened, but with every part distinctly marked if viewed in profile" and a nose that is "rather flat, but still prominent" (394). The Malay has skin that is "tawney"; hair that is "black, soft, curled, thick, and abundant"; a skull that is "rather narrow" with "the forehead slightly arched" and cheekbones that are "not prominent"; a face that is "prominent at its lower part; not

[29] The second edition English translation of Blumenbach's *Institutions of Physiology* was published in 1817, just one year before the first edition of *Frankenstein*.

so narrow as in the Ethiopian variety, but the features, viewed in profile, more distinct" and a nose that is "full, broad, bottled at its point" with a large mouth" (394-95).

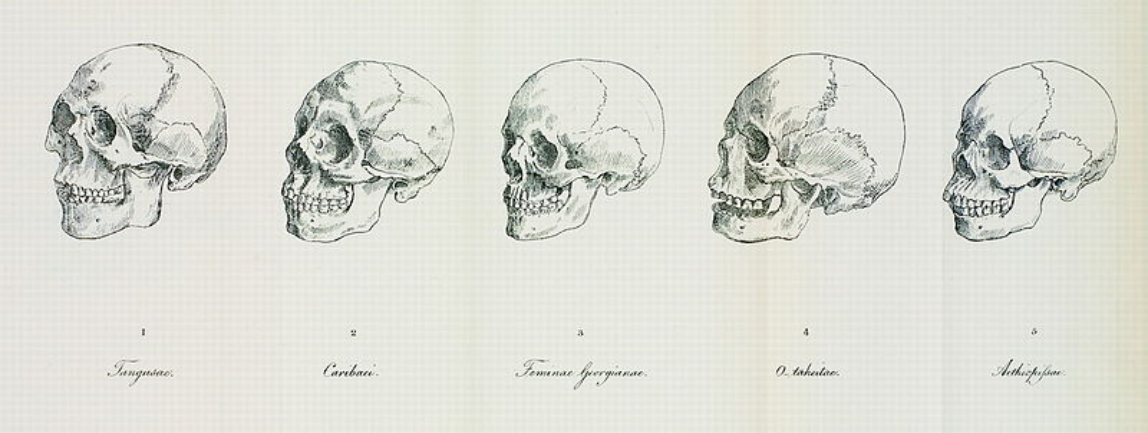

Figure 2. From *The Anthropological Treatises of Johann Friedrich Blumenbach.* Plate IV. The five skulls are labeled, left to right, (1) Tungusae, (2) Caribaei, (3) Feminae Georgianae, (4) O-taheitae, (5) Aethiopissae. Blumenbach believed the skull in the middle, the Georgian Female, to be the most beautiful.

In these later conclusions, Blumenbach clearly establishes what is more like a scale or spectrum than a hierarchy He initially classifies the Caucasian as the most beautiful and the most primitive of the races, the race that holds preeminence over all others. The Mongolian and the Ethiopian, he argues, represent two different extreme degenerations from the Caucasian: the feminized (Mongolian) and the animalistic (Ethiopian). Blumenbach describes the American as a transitional race between Caucasian and Mongolian, but for this concept to work, he also needed a transitional race between the Caucasian and the Ethiopian. Thus, he added a fifth race: the Malay. Though his work is seen as codifying race as we know it, Blumenbach's own scientific goals were not so nefarious. Throughout his writings, Blumenbach avoids drawing conclusions about what his observations and measurements mean. Beyond his opinion regarding the beauty of the Caucasian skull, his tone is largely scientific and free from the more bombastic

claims about race of later figures like Lawrence. In the *History of Physical Anthropology: An Encyclopedia*,[30] the entry for Blumenbach notes the following:

> . . . Blumenbach made no effort to rank the five racial "varieties." Furthermore, in marked contrast to the Göttingen philosopher Christoph Meiners (1747-1810), who harbored the view that the African Negro was "ugly, stupid, and ill-natured" (Meiners 1785), Blumenbach..went to considerable pains to document evidence to the contrary, citing among others the literary achievements of Ignatius Sancho and Gustavus Vasa (Olandah Equiano)—both of whom corresponded with Blumenbach from London, England, where they were well known in artistic circles… (Spencer 185).

Blumenbach mostly relishes in the scientific exploits of measurement, comparison, and classification, most notably through his meticulous cataloging of more than 80 skulls. Blumenbach's work, therefore, is not intent on establishing race stereotypes and Blumenbach himself was, in fact, anti-racist; however, others use his work as a foundation for racist ends, much in the same way that Linnaeus' ordering of the animal kingdom was used to justify the Atlantic slave trade. The three areas in particular that are adopted by future race scientists are the idea of degeneration, which Blumenbach used as a neutral term to explain how different races evolved from the ancient Caucasian but others connoted as evidence of negative traits; the idea of beauty, which was merely a personal preference for Blumenbach but others took to imply that those lacking beauty are worse or lesser beings; and the measurements of craniums, which Blumenbach uses for observation and classification purposes but others use to make arguments regarding

[30] Edited by Frank Spencer, 1997

intelligence. In the hands of others, Blumenbach's work eventually becomes the basis of subjugation and stereotypes that persist long after his race science is reclassified as pseudoscience.

One notable Blumenbach acolyte is Sir William Lawrence of St. Bartholomew's Hospital in London, whose key contribution to race science is the addition of moral characteristics to Blumenbach's five race classifications. Lawrence, a surgeon and teacher in England, is credited as the first person to use the word *biology* in the English language, and his work is largely held as a precursor to Darwin's later work on evolution (Wells). His most notable work, though, is his *Lectures on Physiology, Zoology, and the Natural History of Man*, first published in 1819. When classifying the moral characteristics of native Americans, Africans, Mongolians, and to some extent the Malayans, Lawrence concludes that these races differ from Caucasians in temperament and impulse control, citing a tendency for "cruelty, selfishness," and dishonesty, as well as "apathy and indolence, unless roused by the pressure of actual physical want, or stimulated by the desire of revenge and the thirst of blood." Such people, Lawrence argues, "fill[s] the friend of humanity," which he likely means to be Caucasians, "by turns with pity, indignation, and horror" (Lawrence 411). In the hands of Lawrence, the racial 'Other,' particularly the Mongolian and Ethiopian 'Other,' is solidified as something to be feared, something monstrous. Though Blumenbach may be the foundation, it is Lawrence's work that does much to establish the racial stereotypes that become a persuasive justification for both slavery and colonial rule.

Shelley, Race Science, and Empire

Mary Shelley was most certainly familiar with the scientific discourse of her day. As Anne K. Mellor notes in *Mary Shelley: Her Life, Her Fiction, Her Monsters*, Shelley's first novel, *Frankenstein*, leans on her understanding of such wide-ranging scientific theories such as galvanism and evolution. Victor Frankenstein is consumed by his scientific curiosity that reflects an Enlightenment-era obsession with understanding all of the mysteries of the world, but the novel also muses on the consequences and boundaries of such experimentation. Likewise, Mary Shelley also must have been well aware of the existing science on race. In "*Frankenstein*, Racial Science, and the Yellow Peril," Mellor details the close friendship between Percy and Mary Shelley and William Lawrence, who was a Professor of Anatomy and Surgery at St. Bartholomew's Hospital in London (7). The Shelleys likely met Lawrence in 1811, and by 1814, he was their personal physician; furthermore, "Mary Shelley continued to consult him on medical matters and to meet him socially until his death in 1830" (Mellor, "Racial Science" 9). All evidence about Mary Shelley's life suggests that, even as a young woman of eighteen, she had a vast interest and understanding of early nineteenth-century science and politics. Shelley's views, though, evolve and change as she gains life experience, and that evolution of thought can be seen in the two distinct editions of *Frankenstein*, released in 1818 and 1831. Mellor's essay "Revising *Frankenstein*"[31] compares the two editions of *Frankenstein* and concludes that significant revisions show Shelley's "philosophical views had changed radically," likely as a result of the death of Percy, two of her children,

[31] Published in *Mary Shelley: Her Life, Her Fiction, Her Monsters*; Mellor focuses more on the shift in Victor Frankenstein's character as evidence that her views of fate vs. free will are shifting as a result of a series of devastating life experiences.

and several other close friends, which "convinced Mary Shelley that human events are decided not by personal choice or free will but by material forces beyond our control" (Mellor, *Mary Shelley* 170). The differences between the two editions of *Frankenstein*, however, suggest that Shelley is contemplating not just issues of scientific exploration, or fate versus free will, but also issues involving race, empire, and colonization.

The most notable change that reflects an interest in race and empire is in Elizabeth Lavenza's origin story. Mellor suggests that Shelley likely made this change so that "no incestuous overtones accrue to her marriage to Victor" (*Mary Shelley* 175). However, Elizabeth's revised origins emphasize racial superiority. In the 1818 edition, Elizabeth comes into the Frankenstein home as the orphaned child of Alphonse Frankenstein's sister and is described as having hazel eyes and "rich dark auburn" hair (53). The 1831 revision, however, places Elizabeth with an impoverished family whom the Frankensteins encounter while on a visit to Milan:

> Among these there was one which attracted my mother far above all the rest. She appeared of a different stock. The four others were dark-eyed, hardy little vagrants; this child was thin and very fair. Her hair was the brightest living gold, and despite the poverty of her clothing, seemed to set a crown of distinction on her head. Her brow was clear and ample, her blue eyes cloudless, and her lips and the moulding of her face so expressive of sensibility and sweetness that none could behold her without looking on her as of a distinct species, a being heaven-sent, and bearing a celestial stamp in all her features. (Shelley 42)

Elizabeth's caucasian features, which make her desirable to the Frankensteins, echo Blumenbach's declaration that caucasians possess "the countenance of that style which

we consider the most beautiful" (Blumenbach, *Institutions* 391). Her features are almost otherworldly, even angelic. Her whiteness is contrasted against the "dark-eyed, hardy little vagrants" who evoke no sympathy from Alphonse and Caroline. It is only Elizabeth, with her caucasian blond hair and blue eyes, whose "presence had seemed a blessing to them" so much so that they felt "it would be unfair to her to keep her in poverty and want" (42-43). The white child is simply too perfect, too pure to be left in such conditions. Her physical appearance is also indicative of her character. When she is presented to Victor as a gift, she is described as "a creature who seemed to shed radiance from her looks" and Victor notes that "[e]veryone loved Elizabeth" (42-43). Therefore, Elizabeth represents the European ideal: fair skin, golden hair, genial personality. Though the 1818 edition depicts Elizabeth as beautiful and pleasant, Shelley takes great care in the revision to add details to the text that associate her goodness with her whiteness.

The other key change that indicates an increasing awareness of empire is the character of Henry Clerval. Mellor notes that in the 1818 edition, Clerval appears "as Frankenstein's better half, a moral touchstone against which we can clearly measure Frankenstein's failures" (*Mary Shelley* 174). Conversely, the revised Clerval is a fame-seeker, a defiant son, and has a newfound interest in imperialism. Late in the novel, Frankenstein reveals Clerval's ambitions:

> He was also pursuing an object he had long had in view. His design was to visit India, in the belief that he had in his knowledge of its various languages, and in the views he had taken of its society, the means of materially assisting the progress of European colonisation and trade. In Britain only could he further the execution of his plan. (139)

Clerval, in the 1831 edition, embodies the European belief that non-European countries like India should be colonized for the benefit of Europe, which is a second intentional change that denotes Shelley's increased interest in issues related to race and empire.[32] Clerval does not even bother with the façade of suggesting that he seeks to improve the lives of the colonized; Clerval's focus, rather, is entirely on what he can offer the colonizers through his study of the language and culture. Shelley's treatment of race in the 1818 edition could be viewed merely as a reflection of her understanding of the scientific world, much in the same way as she depicts Galvanism. These two revisions, however, show that Shelley's treatment of race is likely intentional and purposeful.

The Creature as a Racial Other

Whether Shelley intentionally or unintentionally infused the Creature with stereotypical features based on race pseudoscience, the Creature functions as the primary racial 'Other' in the novel and embodies many of the characteristics and fears associated with fearsome, dark 'Others' in the nineteenth century. The Creature comes to life in a world that is predisposed to view him as a monstrous 'Other.' The reader's first view of him comes through Walton's eyes in the opening letters that constitute the frame narrative of *Frankenstein*. The Creature is described as "a being which had the shape of a man, but apparently of gigantic stature," who appears to be "a savage inhabitant of some undiscovered island" (34).[33] To further emphasize the Creature's racial 'Otherness,' Walton notes that Victor, unlike the Creature, is explicitly "an European" (34). Though

[32] There are other characters and plot points present in both the 1818 and 1831 editions, namely the storyline involving the Turkish merchant and Safie, that show issues of race and empire were always of interest to Shelley; however, the additions suggest that Shelley wants to bring a greater focus to these issues than she initially had in the original version.

[33] Except where otherwise noted, the 1831 edition is used for all text references.

this is only a brief glimpse, the monster is quickly and clearly established as non-European, his 'Otherness' exposed because it is presented as difference, as an opposition to the Europeanness of Victor and other characters. The key moment that fully establishes the Creature as a fearful, non-European 'Other,' however, comes when Victor Frankenstein's creation first opens his eyes and breaths in life:

> How can I describe my emotions at this catastrophe, or how delineate the wretch whom with such infinite pains and care I had endeavoured to form? His limbs were in proportion, and I had selected his features as beautiful. Beautiful! — Great God! His yellow skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath; his hair was of a lustrous black, and flowing; his teeth of a pearly whiteness; but these luxuriances only formed a more horrid contrast with his watery eyes, that seemed almost of the same colour as the dun white sockets in which they were set, his shriveled complexion and straight black lips. (59-60)

Frankenstein is immediately horrified by the Creature, as are all other characters who look upon his grotesque appearance. There are certainly rational reasons for such adverse reactions within the context of the novel: the monster is an amalgamation of long-dead body parts, and as the abject undead, he is a liminal being that exists unnaturally between life and death. In *Monstrous Progeny: A History of the Frankenstein Narratives*, Friedman and Kavey note the fact that "[t]he Creature's appearance signals his monstrosity": "It gestures toward his awkward straddling of the line between the natural pieces from which he was made and the unknown process by which he was animated" (Friedman and Kavey 40). However, Shelley's emphasis on his physical characteristics link his monstrosity with his non-European features.

Figure 3. Frontispiece of the 1831 edition of *Frankenstein* by Theodore Von Holst.

The frontispiece from the 1831 edition (Figure 3), which Mellor describes as "the only surviving visual representation of her Creature that Mary Shelley is certain to have seen" ("Racial Science" 11), illustrates this moment of horror while also highlighting the racial difference between Victor and the Creature. The Creature, depicted in the foreground, has dark hair, a large nose, and bulging eyes; he possesses a massive, muscled body; and his body is shaded darker than Victor's, though his skin is so translucent that his bones show through and Mellor observes that one "must imagine [the black-and-white depiction] with yellow skin," as described in the text ("Racial Science" 11). His head almost looks detached as it is twisted at an unnatural angle. In his narration, though, Victor notes that he "had selected his features as beautiful" (59); he had imagined creating the ideal human form, a type of superhuman. The Creature is also depicted without any clothing, which plays on the common trope of native savageness. By contrast, Victor, depicted in the background fully clothed in the European fashion as he flees in horror, has distinctly European facial features by Blumenbach's standards, especially the shape of his eyes and nose. The Creature's Otherness, therefore, is emphasized through this contrast with Europeanness; however, exactly what the monster is supposed to be is not entirely clear. Victor says only that he collected body parts from a variety of sources while taking great care to select the most beautiful features.

Many critics[34] have sought to identify the Creature's specific race, though the most compelling arguments for racial 'Otherness' identify the Creature as either African or Mongolian. Malchow argues that the Creature embodies the stereotype of the African

[34] The most notable critics who have explored the Creature's race are Mellor, H.L. Malchow, Allen Lloyd Smith, David A. Hedrich Hirsch, and, most recently, Karen Piper. They posit that the Creature might be African (Malchow, Smith, and Hirsch), Mongolian (Mellor), or Innuit (Piper).

slave: his size, his darkness, his "ape-like ability to scamper up mountainsides and his endurance of temperatures which European men find intolerable," all align with the belief[35] that African slaves possess more strength and require less care and few luxuries to thrive (Malchow 104-105). The Creature, in his own narrative section of the novel, notes that he "was more agile than [the De Laceys], and could subsist upon coarser diet; [he] bore the extremes of heat and cold with less injury to [his] frame; [his] stature far exceeded theirs" (Shelley 109). Because he is rejected from society, the Creature survives by"loiter[ing] in forests, hid[ing] himself in caves, or tak[ing] refuge in wide and desert heaths" (144-45). Both Malchow and Allen Lloyd Smith note that the monster also embodies a dangerous sexuality related to the fear of a "supposed insatiable desire of black men for white women" (Smith 216), a fear which is most clearly illustrated in the climatic murder of Elizabeth. The frontispiece (figure 2) depicts the Creature's body positioned in a sexualized pose, emphasizing his hypersexuality. The Creature's capacity for vengeance also connects to contemporary reports of slave rebellions, such as the 1791 slave revolt in the French colony Saint-Domingue (Malchow 96, Smith 218). Malchow also notes that, from the earliest staging of *Frankenstein* in 1850, the Creature was depicted as African. Furthermore, contemporary reviews of *Frankenstein* compared the Creature to the slave Caliban from Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (Bugg 656). Even the Creature's retelling of his life after he was abandoned by Victor reads much like a slave narrative (Smith 214). The Creature carefully lays out his life story, beginning with his earliest recollection, as a means of both proving his humanity and evoking sympathy

[35] Lawrence writes extensively about the Ethiopian ability to survive extreme climates, subsist on coarser food than Europeans, and require few comforts in order to thrive. Such claims are used to justify the harsh treatment of slaves.

from the one who has caused his suffering. It is not much of a stretch, then, to see the racial stereotypes of African slaves, along with all of the fears evoked by that correlation, embodied in the Creature.

Equally compelling is Mellor's claim that the Creature actually represents the fears and stereotypes of an Oriental 'Other.' Mellor argues, "the image of the Mongols or Asians as a yellow skinned, black haired, and beardless race was well established . . . in European culture at large" by 1815 (Mellor, "Racial Science" 10). The physical characteristics of the Creature, therefore, align much more closely with the Mongolian race than the African race, and making this association clarifies other aspects of the Creature's monstrosity that do not align with Malchow's argument of the Creature as an African slave. Most notably, the creature is highly intelligent, which goes against racial stereotypes of 'Others,' especially of Africans. Lawrence's writings provide some insights that account for the Creature's intelligence. He differentiates the Mongolian race from the other three "darker races," noting that Mongols are lacking in "docility and moral character"; even though there is evidence that Mongolians are capable "of civilisation, and of great advancement in the useful and even elegant arts of life," when Mongolian tribes are "united under one leader," such as Attila or Genghis Khan, they have brought about "war and desolation," as well as "[u]nrelenting slaughter, without distinction of condition, age, or sex, and universal destruction" (Lawrence 414-415). Such a description encompasses all of the fears associated with Victor Frankenstein's Creature. He is an apt student, as seen in his ability to learn language and philosophy; he is enticed by literature, an elegant art; yet, he is also capable of great destruction and cruelty in his quest for vengeance, which is seen in his unrelenting slaughter of William

and Elizabeth. Mellor also sees the frontispiece as further supporting her argument that the Creature is Mongolian: "this gigantic yellow man is portrayed as a creature of super-human strength and endurance, of intelligence and sensibility, a man who . . . becomes a murdering monster, destroying all those dear to his maker" ("Racial Science" 11). Indeed, both the Creature's appearance and behavior fit well within the established 18th-century stereotypes of Mongols.

I would argue, though, that he is all of those fears wrapped into one terrifying, hideous being. He is a hybrid being after all, perhaps much more terrifying than any one racial 'Other' could be. The Creature embodies every fear, every stereotype, every threat that a monstrous 'Other' possesses. Victor Frankenstein is disgusted by the Creature in part because he does not fit into the clear racial categories that allow for easy classification. The Creature's hybridity, therefore, is the real threat, a threat acknowledged and discussed by the race scientists[36] of the day. When Victor Frankenstein refuses to make a female Creature, one of the ways he rationalizes denying the Creature the one thing that will end the violence and death is that he fears that the Creatures will procreate a "race of devils"; however, another fear is that the female Creature "might turn with disgust from [the Creature] to the superior beauty of man" (Shelley 144), thus creating a hybrid of the hybrid, a mix of the lower races and the European. With so many ways that the Creature can infiltrate Europe, bringing with him death and destruction, no threat is as great as the possibility of infiltration through the mixing of races. In "Sexual Affronts and Racial Frontiers," historian Ann Stoler argues that interracial unions were seen as one of the greatest threats in colonial Southeast Asia.

[36] Blumenbach writes extensively about the dangers of hybrids, though he is more focused on cross-species mixing. Lawrence spends quite a bit of time discussing hybrids as contaminants.

Mixed-race children, cultural hybridities, were viewed as particularly destabilizing and threatening to cultural and national identity (Stoler 344). Elizabeth Bohls, in *Romantic Literature and Postcolonial Studies*, agrees and further argues that the Creature's hybridity undermines the East/West dichotomy, best illustrated in his final vow to "collect [his] funeral pile, and consume to ashes [his] miserable frame" (Shelley 188). Bohls argues that "[t]he image of the pyre is a double allusion conflating Occident and Orient," which includes both "[t]he mythical strongman Hercules" and "the self-immolating Indian widow" (Bohls 174). In the final image of the novel, Shelley reinforces the Creature's hybridity, reminding readers that he has always been a collection of parts, a consolidation of East and West, which is perhaps what makes him so terrifying.

Not every European viewed hybridity negatively though, as evidenced by the number of interracial unions throughout the Empire. For hybrids to be a threat, they must first exist. More progressive Europeans viewed hybridity as a positive influence, much in the way that Lawrence discusses the improvement of "darker races" through at least five generations of interbreeding with Europeans. Likewise, Shelley depicts hybridity not only through the fearsome monster but also through the angelic Safie, the other hybrid racial 'Other' of the novel. Safie, like the Creature, is of mixed race with the addition of a mixed religious background: "Safie related that her mother was a Christian Arab, seized and made a slave by the Turks; recommended by her beauty, she had won the heart of the father of Safie, who married her" (111). She also serves as a kind of filter through which the Creature receives his Western education:

> I heard of the slothful Asiatics,[37] of the stupendous genius and mental activity of the Grecians, of the wars and wonderful virtue of the early Romans—of their subsequent degenerating—of the decline of that mighty empire, of chivalry, Christianity, and kings. I heard of the discovery of the American hemisphere and wept with Safie over the hapless fate of its original inhabitants. (108)

Safie, however, is presented as an exotic 'Other' rather than a monstrous 'Other.' She is beautiful, captivating, alluring in her 'Otherness' as opposed to the grotesque Creature. Felix calls her "his sweet Arabian" and the Creature describes her as possessing "a countenance of angelic beauty and expression" (106). Safie's description also suggests one reason that her hybridity is not a hindrance to being accepted. Despite her "shining raven black" hair and "dark, but gentle" eyes, "her complexion [is] wondrously fair, each cheek tinged with a lovely pink" (106). Safie also successfully assimilates into Western culture. She follows the guidance of her mother, who "instructed her daughter in the tenets of her religion and taught her to aspire to higher powers of intellect and an independence of spirit forbidden to the female followers of Mahomet" (111). Safie's rejection of the East makes her the ideal racial 'Other.' Furthermore, she functions, much like Elizabeth, as a precursor to the Victorian ideal woman: the angel in the house. Because Safie possesses a fair complexion and is willing to assimilate, her hybridity does not hinder her ability to be accepted.

Conversely, the Creature's hybridity is dangerous. His monstrous appearance serves as a barrier that does not allow him to assimilate even though he deeply desires acceptance into the European community. Whether African or Mongolian or some other

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[37] This passage also serves as further evidence of Shelley's knowledge of Blumenbach's and Lawrence's work and her intentional discussion of race through *Frankenstein*.

hybrid being, the Creature essentially represents the bogeyman of the day, encapsulating every fear that nineteenth-century Europeans have regarding the fearsome, dark 'Other.' That fear endures because we, as humans, are always looking for the next monster around the corner, the unknown 'Other' who might destroy all we hold dear. Such irrational fears that surround racial or cultural 'Others' overwhelm the European imagination; the Creature, then, embodies all that is fearsome about the cultural and racial 'Other.' Such fears, however, persist into the twenty-first century and permeate Western associations of migrants, immigrants, and refugees as uncontrollable, monstrous 'Others' who, like Frankenstein's monster, are determined to destroy civilized Western culture.

Frankenstein and Enduring Racial Stereotypes

In the psyche of twenty-first-century Europe and America, the bogeyman, the terrifying creature out to steal, kill, and destroy, is more likely to be brown-skinned than to look like Shelley's yellow-skinned monster. The Creature, viewed from this lens, is much like an undocumented immigrant, or even a refugee, in Europe or America. Malchow briefly notes that the Creature's race is of less importance than the recognition that Shelley "dredged up a bogeyman which had been constructed out of a cultural tradition of the threatening 'Other'--whether troll or giant, gypsy or Negro--from the dark inner recesses of xenophobic fear and loathing" (Malchow 103). While contemporary white Americans and Europeans may not fully understand the irrational fear of an enslaved African or yellow-skinned Mongol, they certainly recognize the fear of a racial 'Other' that threatens to destroy Western culture. The fears surrounding the *yellow peril*, therefore, have been replaced in the twenty-first century by what Patricia Reid-Merritt calls the *brown peril*. The monster, in a sense, is the unwanted immigrant, the alien thing

that is unwelcome, that must be controlled and eventually eradicated from civilized society. The stereotyping established by scientists like Blumenbach and Lawrence persist, even in the twenty-first century. Despite efforts to overturn such assumptions based on race, the belief of the cultural and intellectual superiority of Europeans lingers and manifests in myriad ways.

Foremost among negative stereotyping of racial 'Others' is the connection between appearance and character. Associating certain facial features and skin tones with evil serves to justify the fear of the 'Other.' We tend to believe that those who have the appearance of evil must be evil; therefore, our assumptions of what evil looks like drive our fears, whether rational or irrational. Victor Frankenstein's rejection of his creation is based entirely on the Creature's horrid appearance. Although Victor "had selected his features as beautiful," he is disgusted by the Creature's appearance, his "yellow skin" and "watery eyes," once the hybrid being is animated and becomes a living thing (59-60). Appearance is what sends Victor running away from his creation and is the sole basis for the revulsion he feels toward him. Later in the novel, Victor has the opportunity to know the Creature, to see beyond his ghastly visage. Victor says: "I compassioned him, and sometimes felt a wish to console him; but when I looked upon him, when I saw the filthy mass that moved and talked, my heart sickened, and my feelings were altered to those of horror and hatred" (130). Victor briefly seems to be moved by the Creature's tale of hardship, but once again, his disgust at the Creature's appearance cancels out whatever sympathy the monster has garnered. Conversely, the Creature's only opportunity to form a relationship with someone based on something other than his appearance is his first meeting with DeLacey. Because DeLacey is blind, he cannot see the Creature's

monstrosity and, therefore, is able to figuratively see the man instead of the monster, if only briefly (120-21). Combined with all of the stereotypes associated with the Creature, the revulsion that so many characters feel toward his appearance can be seen as an early form of racial profiling. In the twenty-first century, racial profiling relies on similar rushes to judgment based on appearance. *The Immigrant Other*, a collection of essays regarding the immigrant experience, explores the various ways that the appearance of evil is associated with Latinx migrant workers, brown-skinned asylum seekers, and most significantly, Muslim men. Loaded phrases like 'illegal alien' and 'radical Islamic terrorist' that are explicitly connected to a brown-skinned 'Other' only serve to further cement the connection between appearance and monstrosity; furthermore, "various policies and practices associated with the criminalization of immigration situate undocumented immigrants (and documented immigrants and citizens) as threatening 'others'" (Epps et al., 4). Problematic immigrants are almost always racial 'Others' in Western countries: from the stereotyping of undocumented workers stealing American jobs to the fear of terrorists posing as Syrian refugees throughout Europe, the brown-skinned immigrant, or *brown peril*, is the new monster threatening American and European safety.

The Creature, like many immigrants in America and Europe in the twenty-first century, has both the potential and the desire for good—to contribute to society and to be part of a community—but he is repeatedly denied that opportunity. He attempts to assimilate, to learn the language and the culture of which he longs to be a part. He is willing to do whatever he needs to do to be accepted into the community. In the scene with the DeLacey family, we can see the reflection of a migrant worker whose

contributions to society are virtually invisible, even as he is simultaneously blamed for society's problems. The Creature does all he can to lighten the burden of the family that he has come to love:

> . . . as often as it was necessary, I cleared their path from the snow and performed those offices that I had seen done by Felix. I afterwards found that these labours, performed by an invisible hand, greatly astonished them; and once or twice I heard them, on these occasions, utter the words *good spirit*, *wonderful*; but I did not then understand the signification of these terms. (104)

The Creature so longs to be accepted into a community that he gives the only thing he has to offer: his labor. And though his efforts are appreciated, the family is incapable of realizing that the kindness is bestowed by another person rather than some kind of divine blessing. When he finally risks being seen, he is instead attacked and rejected by the family he had served so faithfully while asking so little in return.

Through the repeated rejections that the Creature experiences as a result of his appearance, he also develops a double consciousness as he comes to see himself "through the eyes of others, of measuring [his] soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity" (Du Bois 342). This is most evident when the Creature sees his own reflection and is only able to see himself as a contrast to the De Lacey family:

> I had admired the perfect forms of my cottagers—their grace, beauty, and delicate complexions; but how was I terrified when I viewed myself in a transparent pool! At first I started back, unable to believe that it was indeed I who was reflected in the mirror; and when I became fully convinced that I was in reality the monster that I am, I was filled with the bitterest sensations of despondence and

> mortification. Alas! I did not yet entirely know the fatal effects of this miserable deformity. (104)

Because he can only see himself through the eyes of a society that has rejected him, the Creature is disgusted by his own appearance. He comes to view himself as "hideously deformed and loathsome" and "not even the same nature as man" (109). The secondhand European education he receives from the De Laceys only fuels his self-hatred so that he begins to wonder if he really is a monster, "a blot upon the earth," which is how everyone seems to see him (109). In coming to view himself as monstrous, the Creature also realizes that his attempts to assimilate into European society cannot be realized.

The Creature's actions to do good are also often misinterpreted as evil. The DeLaceys, once the Creature reveals himself to them, cannot see past his appearance and are unable to reconcile his appearance with his desire for companionship and community. When the Creature begins his search for Victor, he comes across a young girl who falls into a river. Once again, the Creature's nature is to do good, to save the girl, but his actions are misinterpreted:

> I rushed from my hiding-place; and with extreme labor from the force of the current, saved her, and dragged her to shore. She was senseless; and I endeavored, by every means in my power, to restore animation, when I was suddenly interrupted by the approach of a rustic… On seeing me, he darted towards me, and tearing the girl from my arms, hastened towards the deeper parts of the wood. I followed speedily, I hardly knew why; but when the man saw me draw near, he aimed a gun, which he carried, at my body, and fired. (Shelley 125)

The Creature innately seeks to serve the people with whom he comes in contact. His instinct is to save the young girl, but his size and his appearance hinder his efforts; therefore, his good deeds are interpreted as an attack. Every effort he makes is met with the opposite response he expects, and each time he is rejected and attacked, his Otherness, his monstrosity is reinforced. Even after that incident, when the Creature encounters the young William Frankenstein, he again attempts to make contact in the hopes "that this little creature was unprejudiced, and had lived too short a time to have imbibed a horror of deformity" (126). Even at a young age, though, William has learned through his father or literature that 'Others' are dangerous, and he recognizes this Creature as a dangerous 'Other' immediately: he screams, he calls the Creature a "Hideous monster!," and interprets the Creature's actions as an attempt to do him harm (126). William also reveals his surname, a fatal mistake that causes the Creature to lash out: "I, too, can create desolation," he proclaims as he decides to kill the child (126). Because all attempts to be part of the human community fail, the Creature decides to embrace his monstrosity, to become the monstrous destroyer that everyone assumes him to be.

Rejected by his creator, by the De Lacey family, and every other human he encounters, the Creature has no recourse except to demand "a companion . . . of the same species" who is "as deformed and horrible" as he believes himself to be (127). The Creature's demand for a mate, a female monster, brings about another stereotype of racial 'Others,' particularly immigrants: the threat posed by a female 'Other.' As Victor contemplates the creation of the female monster, he runs through a list of possible worst outcomes, the possible ramifications that he failed to consider before creating the

Creature: the female "might become ten thousand times more malignant than her mate and delight, for its own sake, in murder and wretchedness"; the two monsters may not be compatible; or she might even reject the Creature and "turn with disgust from him to the superior beauty of man" (144). There is a subtle suggestion of sexual violence, that the female monster might rape white men. This image of the oversexed female 'Other' brings to mind not only figures like the "Hottentot Venus" Sarah Baartman,[38] who was put on display as both "an image of exotic, voluptuous allure" as well as "a monstrosity, an aberration of nature, a grotesque freak" (Solly et al. 133), but also the way African American women are still caricatured in the twenty-first century as voluptuous and hypersexual as well as manly and animalistic. The greatest possible threat posed by a female monster, though, is procreation that results in an infestation.

The threat of procreation is a key motivation for anti-immigration efforts across the United States and Europe. While many fears surround immigrants entering America and Europe, the greater fear involves future generations of racial 'Others' who might alter the cultural landscape. The worst possible outcome that Victor can imagine, and the one that leads him to abort his agreement with the Creature, is the fact that the female monster poses the threat of procreation:

> Even if they were to leave Europe and inhabit the deserts of the new world, yet one of the first results of those sympathies for which the dæmon thirsted would be children, and a race of devils would be propagated upon the earth who might make the very existence of the species of man a condition precarious and full of terror. Had I right, for my own benefit, to inflict this curse upon everlasting

[38] Also called Sartjee Baartman.

> generations? I had before been moved by the sophisms of the being I had created; I had been struck senseless by his fiendish threats; but now, for the first time, the wickedness of my promise burst upon me; I shuddered to think that future ages might curse me as their pest, whose selfishness had not hesitated to buy its own peace at the price, perhaps, of the existence of the whole human race. (144)

Frankenstein fears the potential threat of a "race of devils" invading the West, and that fear continues in the twenty-first-century images of an immigrant infiltration that spans many generations. The assumption that Victor makes is that the race of monsters, clearly separate from the human race, will overrun the world. Similar claims are made about immigrants in America and Europe changing the cultural landscape through procreation, which will cause whites to lose their hold on majority status. Census projections[39] for the United States suggest that whites will continue to shrink due to declining birth rates and rising death rates of whites. Meanwhile, the "two or more races" category is the fastest growing demographic, followed by Asians and Hispanics of any race, though the causes vary from "high rates of natural increase, given the relatively young age structures" for those who are Two or More Races or Hispanic, to "high net international migration" for those who are Asian (U.S. Census Bureau). Such data is often cited as evidence that dark 'Others,' like the Creature's hypothetical progeny, are taking over the West through procreation. To avoid this terrible outcome, Victor "tore to pieces" the female, choosing to risk the wrath of a single male monster rather than the greater threat of a female who can create an entire race of monsters.

[39] Released by the US Census Bureau in March of 2018.

Once he is denied a chance to have a companion, though, the Creature is completely stripped of all hope for the companionship and community that he so greatly desired; instead he fully embraces his role as destroyer of man (and woman). Another common stereotype of the fearsome, dark 'Other' is the capacity for violence and the threat posed to white women. In commenting on the general moral characteristics, Lawrence notes that the "darker races" possess little ability to feel empathy and are instead cruel, selfish, apathetic "unless roused by the pressure of actual physical want, or stimulated by the desire of revenge and the thirst of blood"; furthermore, their "barbarous treatment of women, the indiscriminate and unrelenting destruction of their warfare, the infernal torments inflicted on their captives, and the horrible practice of cannibalism" pose an imminent threat to civilized European society (Lawrence 411). The Creature certainly embodies these fearsome qualities. He is stirred by a quest for revenge and is certainly capable of committing terrible acts of violence and destruction. Most of all, he poses the ultimate threat of the dark other: "the classic threat of the black male" (Malchow 112). Elizabeth's death at the Creature's hands includes sexual overtones that evoke the stereotype of the dark 'Other' defiling the white woman's purity:

> She was there, lifeless and inanimate, thrown across the bed, her head hanging down, and her pale and distorted features half covered by her hair. Every where I turn I see the same figure--her bloodless arms and relaxed form flung by the murderer on its bridal bier (167).

When Victor sees Elizabeth's body, he sees "[t]he murderous mark of the fiend's grasp was on her neck, and the breath had ceased to issue from her lips" (168). The fact that Elizabeth is strangled on her bridal bed makes her death also a symbolic rape, the dark

'Other' has left his mark of impurity and defilement on Elizabeth's pure whiteness. Malchow notes that Elizabeth's death depicts "the construction of both race and a vulnerable femininity," of the "master-race maiden whom the monster—her racial negative; dark-haired, low-browed, with watery and yellowed eyes—violently assaults," thus bringing to fruition "the threat of terrible violence which over-sexed 'Others' would carry to the whole white race" (Malchow 112-13). The symbolism of strangling-in-place-of-rape is made literal in the 2011 staging of *Frankenstein* by the Royal National Theatre in London. In this adaptation, the Creature actually does rape Elizabeth before strangling her, a directorial decision that makes the anticipated death scene truly horrifying.

Ultimately, the Creature subverts many of the racial stereotypes of Mary Shelley's day, and through that subversion we may see Shelley's argument as being less about destroying monsters or even chastising those who create monsters and more about addressing stereotyping and hatred. Read one way, *Frankenstein* tells the tale of a horrifying monster who is violent and dangerous, but read another way, he is an innocent victim who was stripped of his humanity by a culture that refused to allow him into the community. His monstrosity was not inherited but created. The suggestion, then, is not that racial 'Others' are inherently monstrous. Mellor argues that it is only Victor Frankenstein's refusal to provide the Creature with inclusion, "to belong to an already established Caucasian family unit or to be given a wife and children of his own kind" that leads to his vengeance (Mellor 22). Perhaps, she argues, Mary Shelley is not "subscribing to Lawrence's racial hierarchies" but instead "suggesting that racial difference and interracial mating are social evils *only* when we see them and write them as evil" (Mellor 23). The Creature enters the world with a longing to be embraced, yet he is rejected by

society. He also has great potential: he is highly intelligent, capable of learning language and philosophy independently; he is thoughtful, reflective, and sensitive, characteristics which reveal his humanity; and he is sensitive to the needs of others, showing that he has the capacity for emotional attachments. The humans in which he comes in contact, however, see only his 'Otherness,' his monstrous appearance, something to be feared. Though he has the potential for goodness, the rejection he faces ultimately unleashes a catastrophic force intent on destroying Western civilization: the gentle monster who once longed for acceptance becomes the terroristic threat that society already assumes him to be.

Victor is incapable of seeing the Creature as existing peacefully in the world and contributing positively to society. Similarly, nationalistic policies, such as Brexit in the UK and the zero-tolerance border policy in the US, are just as much rooted in fears of future generations of racial and cultural 'Others' as they are the current generation crossing the border. However, such fears tend to disregard the role that the West, through centuries of oppression and exploitation, has played in creating their own bogeyman. Likewise, Victor never admits fault or shares the blame for his role in both creating the monster and rejecting the monster, both actions which are at least partially responsible for violence and death. Depictions of the Creature in popular culture over the past two hundred years have, in a way, followed the evolution of how we view race. Like a slave taking the name of his master, the Creature has taken the name of Frankenstein because he is allowed no other name. The Creature, in the novel, is thoughtful and poetic, but in the cultural adaptations, he is often stripped of his voice, his humanity, his intelligence, much like the way colonization stripped so many racial 'Others' of their own art and

culture. Popular depictions of the Creature show an unthinking, unfeeling zombie monster, with all of his depth and complexity replaced by unintelligible groans. We can also see the outcome of such efforts to strip 'Others' of their humanity in the very issues that plague race relations in the twenty-first century: migrant camps, border detention centers, mass incarceration, police brutality, and on and on. In the social and political climate of twenty-first century Europe and America, such an argument about the way we choose to treat racial and cultural 'Others' still resonates, and if there is any lesson to learn from Victor Frankenstein and his Creature it is that our fears toward racial 'Others' are not only irrational but are often unfounded and even potentially destructive to our own interests.

CHAPTER III

'Fearful and Ghastly': Bertha Mason and the Intersection of Race and Gender

In the #MeToo Movement era of the twenty-first century, women are beginning to speak out about the abuse they have suffered at the hands of powerful men. Many suffered in silence for decades until the winds of social change provided a platform and a voice. According to the movement's official website, #MeToo was founded in 2006 by Tarana Burke "to help survivors of sexual violence, particularly Black women and girls, and other young women of color from low wealth communities." However, it was not until 2017, the aftermath of a contentious election that seemed to validate locker room talk excuses and boys-will-be-boys apologists, that the movement gained widespread national attention.[40] On the day after President Trump's inauguration, women marched in protest[41] in Washington, D.C. Burke's decade-old hashtag movement went viral. *Time* magazine named 'The Silence Breakers'[42] their persons of the year in 2017, and the article traced the long struggle of women seeking to be heard and seen (Zacharek et al.). Worth noting, though, is that despite Burke's early efforts, it was not until well-known white women began sharing their own stories of sexual violence, and prominent white men began facing career-ending consequences, that the movement exploded: "When a movie star says #MeToo, it becomes easier to believe the cook who's been quietly enduring for years" (Zacharek et al.). Of course, women have suffered abuse—sexual,

[40] The "October Surprise" of the 2016 US Presidential election was the release of a 2005 recording in which then-candidate Donald Trump describes how he forces himself on women (Fahrenthold). The recording was dismissed by Trump as "locker-room banter" (qtd. in Fahrenthold), and Trump won the election.

[41] The day after Trump's inauguration as president, thousands of women marched in Washington, D.C., in protest wearing pink "pussy hats" (Dwyer).

[42] Rather than selecting one 'Person of the Year,' *Time* magazine named a group of women the 'Person of the Year' and called them "The Silence Breakers" because of their efforts to bring attention to rampant sexual abuse against women by powerful men.

physical, emotional—much longer than the decades of history that have been recounted in the wake of the #MeToo movement.

Throughout history, women have struggled to overcome oppression and abuse both within their societies and at the hands of powerful men, and the Victorian era is no different. Jane Eyre, the title character of Charlotte Brontë's first novel, certainly suffers abuse throughout her life. The novel presents itself as Jane's autobiography, narrated as if Jane is writing her own story, and as such, Jane is the heroine of the story, the protagonist with whom readers often identify and for whom they champion. Readers are heartbroken and angry at the injustices that Jane endures yet proud of the way she endures with such grace and tenacity. They rejoice when she finds love and are crestfallen when her happiness is dashed on her wedding day. Jane, in many ways, is the ultimate feminist heroine, the #MeToo spokeswoman of the nineteenth century. She is smart, strong willed, determined—and she overcomes every obstacle to achieve her own happy ending. But there is another woman lurking in the shadows of Thornfield Hall, one who is not celebrated and championed and adored: Bertha Mason, Rochester's first wife. Though her existence is unknown for much of the novel, her presence is undeniable from the moment Jane steps into Thornfield, and the key climactic moments of the novel center on the conflict between Jane and Bertha. In *Jane Eyre*, Bertha is often characterized as a mere foil to Jane; however, she also emerges from the ashes as a misunderstood feminist heroine in her own right, the 'Other'[43] situated at the intersection of race and gender who achieves her own #MeToo moment.

[43] The term 'Other' is used here to signify the individual who is removed from the subject position, which is Western and male. Othering can be a result of racial difference, as discussed by postcolonial theorists Homi K. Bhabha and Edward Said, or gender, as discussed by feminist theorists Julia

Many critics have noted that Bertha primarily functions as a foil for or a mirror image of Jane. Lori Pollock argues that this is unsurprising because "they are brought together in the text initially through their mirrored reflections," which Pollock identifies as a type of Lacanian mirror stage where self and Other are split (Pollock 250). They are both 'others' in the novel, both outsiders who are filled with passion, but where Jane is often mild-mannered and always plain, Bertha is fiery, wild, and uncontrollable. Because the novel is told from Jane's perspective, she occupies the place of privilege as the protagonist, and the reader's perception is filtered through her experiences. Jane is, as Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar explain in their seminal feminist study, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, representative of the "difficulties Everywoman in a patriarchal society must meet and overcome: oppression (at Gateshead), starvation (at Lowood), madness (at Thornfield), and coldness (at Marsh End)" (339). Gilbert and Gubar, despite naming their book for Bertha, also situate Bertha as a mere foil for Jane. Bertha is the manifestation of all that Jane represses in her life, the fire to Jane's ice. Fittingly, then, Jane's "confrontation, not with Rochester but with Rochester's mad wife Bertha, is the book's central confrontation, an encounter" that forces Jane to confront "her own imprisoned 'hunger, rebellion, and rage,' a secret dialogue of self and soul on whose outcome . . . the novel's plot, Rochester's fate, and Jane's coming-of-age all depend" (Gilbert and Gubar 339). As the titular *Madwoman in the Attic*, Bertha is a metaphor for the repression of female creativity in the nineteenth century, yet she still struggles to break free from her role as a weak antithesis to the heroic Jane. Bertha, as well as Rochester's other mistresses, are foreign and exotic. Laura Freeburg Kees explains, in "'Sympathy' in *Jane*

Kristeva, Luce Irigaray, and Hélène Cixous. In the case of this essay and the character of Bertha Mason, her Otherness involves the intersection of race and gender.

Eyre," that "[a]gainst these women, Brontë amplifies Jane's Englishness—her plain features and plain speech, her virtue in the face of Rochester's desire (contrasted with Bertha's debauchery and the foreign mistresses), and finally Jane's own family, revealed in the Rivers episode" (881-82). However, Bertha is more than a mere foil for Jane. Through her, we can see both the repression of female sexuality and stereotyping of racial 'Others' in Victorian England, those who exist outside the Victorian ideal.

Bertha Mason and the Question of Racial Identity

Though Bertha Mason's presence looms over Thornfield Hall, it is not until the climactic moment at Rochester's and Jane's attempted wedding that her identity is revealed. In the letter signed by Richard Mason and presented by solicitor Mr. Briggs, we learn:

> Edward Fairfax Rochester, of Thornfield Hall, in the county of —, and of Ferndean Manor, in —shire, England, was married to my sister, Bertha Antoinetta Mason, daughter of Jonas Mason, a merchant, and of Antoinetta his wife, a Creole, at — church, Spanish Town, Jamaica. (Brontë 260)

The most pertinent information for Jane and all other characters in the novel is the proof that Rochester is unable to marry because he is still married to another woman; however, the biographical information provided briefly in the letter constitutes the bulk of what we know of Bertha Mason before she took up residence in Rochester's attic. Bertha Mason is an English-Creole hybrid by her brother's account; however, the ambiguity of the term *creole* makes Bertha's actual racial background ambiguous. Carolyn Allen, in "Creole Then And Now: The Problem Of Definition," addresses the problematic term and notes that "'Creole' is, among other things, language type, person, style and culture. Given the

range of meanings, it is not surprising to find contradictory claims" (34). This leads to varying usages across the Caribbean, with some using the term to identify nationality and others using it to identify race. The origins of the term, however, are as obscure as is the meaning of the term.

The *Oxford English Dictionary* entry on the term *creole* traces the complicated etymology of the word, which is most likely a borrowed word from one or a combination of three different languages: the Spanish *criollo*, which was used to refer to both white (1581) and African (1602) people born in the colonies; the French *créole*, which referred to white Europeans born in the colonies (1670); or the Portugese *crioulo*, which referred to either white or African people born in the colonies (1596). The OED definition is equally unclear:

> Chiefly in the Caribbean, certain parts of the Americas (esp. tropical South America, the Gulf States, and parts of Central America), and in Mauritius and Réunion: a person born in one of these countries, but of European or African descent. (Originally used to distinguish such people from those of similar descent who were born in Europe or Africa, and from indigenous peoples. The following senses are clearly defined in early use, but the distinctions become less clear towards the present day. In modern use, the term is generally used for people with shared European linguistic and cultural heritage, rather than relating to race.) (OED)

The noun form of the term, first used as early as 1697,[44] initially referred to "[a] descendant of white European settlers (esp. Spanish or French) who is born in a

[44] According to the OED, William Dampier's *New Voyage Around the World* (1697)

colonized country," though as early as 1720, the term also referred to "[a]ny such person of mixed ancestry born in a country previously colonized by white Europeans"; by 1737, the term could also be used to refer to "[a] person of black African descent born in the Caribbean or mainland Americas" (OED). The adjective form of the term, however, was used to distinguish someone "born in a colonized country distinct to that of his or her ancestors" (OED), which accounts for the various uses of terms like *Creole Negro* to distinguish between different races among peope living in the West Indies.

By the nineteenth century, the term *creole* by itself is ambiguous and additional descriptors like *French* or *Negro* are needed in order to determine race with more specificity; the term could describe people who are white, black, or of a mixed race. In "The Tropical Extravagance of Bertha Mason," Sue Thomas concludes that there were four possible definitions in use in nineteenth century Britain: "white people of Spanish descent naturalized by birth in Spanish America; people of non-aboriginal descent naturalized by birth in the West Indies; non-aboriginal people 'of different colours' (white or 'negro') born in Spanish America . . . ; and white people of European descent naturalized by birth in the West Indies" (Thomas 2). Throughout much of the eighteenth century, as European colonization thrives and expands, the term *creole* finds its way into writings about science, medicine, nature, and travel, and even in imaginative literature, though the usage varies drastically despite efforts to clearly define the term. The term is generally used to denote people who are born in the West Indies,[45] regardless of the nationality or race of the parents. Some writers seek to define the term *creole* for their readers, though the definitions do not serve to make the term any less ambiguous. In *The*

[45] Some writers include the East Indies when discussing creoles, but most focus on the West Indies.

Jamaica Lady: or, the life of Bavia, a table of terms and definitions that follows the story defines *creole* in general terms, "one born in the Island of Jamaica," but within the context of the story, the term references a person of mixed ancestry who is born in Jamaica (102, 86). William Spavens, in his travel memoir titled *The Seaman's Narrative*,[46] uses a more narrow definition of the term *creole* as separate group from any other possible classification of race he encounters. He lists out the inhabitants of Barbados as "composed of English, Scotch, Irish, Creoles, Mustees, Mulattas, and Negroes; the latter of which, though they are chiefly slaves, are by far the most in number"; however, in defining each of the groups listed, Spavens notes that "[a] Creole is a white person born on the island" (Spavens 197). The meaning of the term, therefore, seems to vary from writer to writer, especially in instances when writers choose not to explicitly define the term.

In many medical treatises[47] from the eighteenth century, writers sometimes distinguish between the French and Creole as two separate groups, implying a difference between those born in Europe and those born in the West Indies; they also use the terms French Creoles and Creole-Negroes as subcategories, with the former representing West Indies-born offspring of French Europeans and the latter West Indies-born offspring of Africans. Such implications, however, are assumed and never clearly defined in the treatises. However, the writers generally conclude that French Creoles are more

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[46] Full title: *The Seaman's Narrative; Containing an account of a great variety of such incidents as the author met with in the sea service. Also a descriptive account of the discipline, allowance, and customs of His Majesty's Navy, the East India Company, . . . To which is added, a short and plain introduction to astronomy and geography; . . . And an explanation of nautical terms* (1796)

[47] Such treatises include Thomas Goulard's *A treatise on the effects and various preparations of lead, Particularly of the extract of satur*n (1770); Colin Chisolm's *An Essay on the Malignant Pestilential Fever introduced into the West Indian Islands from Boullam* (1795); The College of Physicians of Philadelphia's *Facts and Observations Relative to the Nature and Origin of the Pestilential Fever* (1798); Robert Jackson's *An outline of the history and cure of fever, endemic and contagious* (1798).

susceptible to dangerous diseases like yellow fever, while the Creole-Negroes appear to be more hardy. Such conclusions align with the eighteenth-century racial assumptions about the differences between Europeans and Africans.[48] In *The Natural History of Animals, Vegetables, and Minerals*, written by French naturalist[49] Georges-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon, the only mention of a creole person comes from the account of a Father Charlevoix who has interacted with a variety of people from Africa and the Americas. Father Charlevoix concludes, according to Buffon,

> that the Creole-Negroes, from whatever nation they may derive their origin, inherit nothing from their parents but their spirit of servitude, and their colour; and that they are more ingenious, more rational, more adroit, though more idle, and more debauched, than those who come from Africa. (Buffon 243)

Like other scientific writers of the period, Buffon does not clearly define the difference between "Negroes" and "Creole-Negroes." In these cases, the writers assume that their audience will recognize *creole* as denoting someone born in the West Indies, and any additional descriptors, such as *negro* or *French*, identify the racial makeup of the person.

Famed race scientist Johann Blumenbach seems somewhat conflicted about the term, which he defines in several different ways across his writings. He includes the term *creole* in the section for hybrids, alongside the term *mulatto* in the 1775 version of *On the Natural Variety of Mankind*:[50] "The offspring of a black man and a white woman, or the

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[48] Race scientists like Blumenbach conclude that Africans are able to subsist on coarser food and in harsher conditions than Europeans.

[49] Much like Zoologist Carolus Linneaus, who studied extensively to classify the Animal, Plant, and Mineral Kingdoms in his most notable work, *Systema Naturae* (1735), Buffon sought to define and classify the three kingdoms; however, his final product, published in 36 volumes (1749-1788), only covered the mineral kingdom and a limited study of the animal kingdom.

[50] Blumenbach's texts are cited here from the translated collection titled *The Anthropological Treatises of Johann Friedrich Blumenbach* (1865).

reverse, is called *Mulatto*, *Mollaka*, *Melatta*; by the Italians, *Bertin*, *Creole* and *Criole*; by the inhabitants of Malabar, *Mestiço*" (112). This would suggest that *creole* refers to a hybrid, the italian version of *mulatto* (see Fig. 4), but his suggestion that the word is of Italian origin does not align with any other etymology of the word.

112 HYBRIDS.

1. The offspring of a black man and a white woman, or the reverse, is called *Mulatto*[1], *Mollaka*[2], *Melatta;* by the Italians, *Bertin, Creole* and *Criole*[3]; by the inhabitans of Malabar, *Mestiço*[4]. The offspring of an American man and an European woman, *Mameluck*[5], and *Metif*[6].

2. The offspring of an European male with a Mulatto female is called *Terceron*[7], *Castiço*[8]. The son of an European female from a *Metif* is called a *Quarteroon*[9]. The offspring of two Mulattoes is called *Casque*[10]; and of blacks and Mulattoes, *Griffs*[11].

3. A Terceron female and an European produce *quaterons*[12], *postiços*[13]. But the American quarteroon (who is of the same degree as the black Terceron) produces from an European *octavoons*[14].

4. The offspring of a quateroon male and a white female, a *quinteroon*[15]; the child of an European woman with an American octavoon is called by the Spaniards *Puchuela*[16].

Figure 4. Excerpt from the section on hybridity from the 1775 edition of Blumenbach's *On the Natural Varieties of Mankind*. Here, he suggests an Italian origin and notes that *creole* refers to a hybrid.

In the 1795 edition, however, he contradicts his earlier discussions of the term. In the section titled "Of the Causes and Ways by Which Mankind Has Degenerated, as a Species," Blumenbach dedicates several paragraphs to the discussion of creoles. Here, he claims that the term *creole* is "so frequently confounded even by good authors with the word Mulattos" (215), which would seem to implicate him as one of those "good authors" who have erroneously conflated *mulatto* and *creole*. Instead, Blumenbach

defines creoles as "those men born indeed either in the East or West Indies, but of *European parents*" (215). The difference in skin tone is, Blumenbach claims, the effect of living in a different climate, which affects not only Europeans "but also in Asiatics who are born in the East Indies from Persian or Mongolian parents who have emigrated there" (215-16). Blumenbach contradicts himself again in his 1806 treatise *Contributions to Natural History*, which includes a section titled "Of the Negro in Particular." As he attempts to explain how attractiveness varies across all races, he presents an example of a creole of Congolese descent to prove his thesis:

> all [negroes] are more of less different from one another, and through all sorts of gradations run imperceptibly into the appearance of men of other kinds up to the most pleasing conformation. Of this sort was a female creole, with whom I conversed in Yverdun, at the house of the Chevalier Treytorrens, who had brought her from St Domingo, and both whose parents were of Congo. Such a countenance--even in the nose and the somewhat thick lips--was so far from being surprising, that if one could have set aside the disagreeable skin, the same features with a white skin must have universally pleased (307).[51]

Blumenbach periodically changes his definitions and expands his categories throughout his writings on race. He notably added a fifth race classification in his later writings; however, he makes no effort to explain his contradictory shifts on the term *creole*.

Blumenbach also endorses the belief that climate affects race. In his footnotes of his 1775 edition of *On the Nature of Mankind*, Blumenbach cites Hawkesworth's *Collection of Voyages*, as support for his claims about the nature of creoles:

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[51] Lawrence quotes this same anecdote in his own writings in the section that discusses differences and variations of features within each racial group.

> If two natives of England marry in their own country, and afterwards remove to our settlements in the West Indies, the children that are conceived and born there will have the complexion and cast of countenance that distinguishes the Creole; if they return, the children conceived and born afterwards, will have no such characteristics. (Hawkesworth 778)

By this standard, climate is the main factor in determining whether a person is Creole or European according to both Blumenbach and Hawkesworth. English physician William Lawrence, a nineteenth-century acolyte of Blumenbach, synthesizes Blumenbach's conclusions into a more succinct, but no less ambiguous, definition of the term *creole*:

> The word Creole (criollo) has been frequently confounded with [Mulatto], even by good writers; but that name, originally applied by the first Negroes conveyed to America in the sixteenth century, to their children born in that country, and borrowed by the Spandiards from them to denote their own offspring in the new world, belongs properly to the children of European or Negro parents born in the East or West Indies. (Lawrence 295)

Lawrence also directly quotes Blumenbach's conclusions about the way climate can change a person's physical characteristics so that the offspring of European parents born in the West Indies have features that are more like indigenous Americans. Lawrence concludes, however, that Blumenbach was led astray by Hawkesworth on this point; the changes in skin color are a temporary rather than a permanent effect of exposure to the sun, which leads him to conclude that the skin color difference of the Creole born to European parents "is merely the acquired effect of the climate, and not a character existing at birth" (509). By Lawrence's definition, a European creole would not possess

any of the degenerate moral characteristics of what he calls the darker races, and any difference in appearance would revert once the person returned to the European climate.

Lawrence's work is most notable for his efforts to attach moral characteristics to Blumenbach's five races: he concludes that darker races are more prone to violence and debauchery, among other negative traits.[52] Such a conclusion by a noted English physician writing in the early nineteenth century provides a point of comparison and analysis of a racially ambiguous character. Many critics have explored the question of Bertha's race, including Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Patricia McKee, and Susan Meyer, who each explore ideas of colonialism and female oppression through the character of Bertha, a non-English 'Other' by Victorian standards. In Spivak's analysis, Bertha's Otherness is not racial but cultural as Bertha embodies imperialist attitudes toward the inferiority of colonized places and peoples. She notes that Bertha Mason emerges as "a figure produced by the axiomatics of imperialism" but identifies her as a "white Jamaican Creole" who possesses animalistic qualities that make her subhuman and, therefore, less sympathetic as the legal wife of Jane's love interest (Spivak 247). This allows Rochester's attempted bigamy to be explained away, even excused, by those who should be disgusted at both his cruel treatment of his wife and his deception of Jane. Meyer counters Spivak's assumption that Bertha is a white creole and argues that Bertha's race is both ambiguous and "directly related to her function as a representative of dangers

[52] From Lawrence's *Lectures on Physiology, Zoology, and the Natural History of Man*: "In the most authentic descriptions, we everywhere find proofs of astonishing insensibility to the pains and joys of others, even their nearest relations; inflexible cruelty, selfishness, and disposition to cheat; a want of all sympathetic impulses and feelings; the most brutal apathy and indolence, unless roused by the pressure of actual physical want, or stimulated by the desire of revenge and the thirst of blood. Their barbarous treatment of women, the indiscriminate and unrelenting destruction of their warfare, the infernal torments inflicted on their captives, and the horrible practice of cannibalism, fill the friend of humanity by turns with pity, indignation, and horror" (Lawrence 411).

which threaten the world of the novel" (Meyer 252); the analogy between the treatment of black people and the treatment of women is employed by Brontë "to signify not shared inferiority but shared oppression" (Meyer 251). McKee argues that Bertha's darkness is more metaphorical than literal, that the darkness is more related to her insanity than her race. However, even though McKee believes that none of the descriptions of Bertha determines "a biological blackness," those descriptions do "assign her grades of cultural, emotional, and intellectual development deemed primitive on Victorian scales of civilization; and all of these conditions are attached, within Victorian racial discourse, to biological darkness" (McKee 70). There is certainly some credence to the argument that Brontë uses darkness of complexion metaphorically. Both Rochester[53] and Blanche Ingram[54] are described as possessing dark skin, eyes, and hair, and their darkness is more related to their moral ambiguity than their race. However, whether Bertha is white, as earlier critics assume, or mixed-race is ultimately irrelevant—her race is constructed through the narrative in the imagery and associations used to characterize her as explicitly non-white in a way that other 'dark' characters are not.

The Intersection of Bertha's Race and Gender

Bertha Mason embodies all of the fears that threaten traditional Victorian society as a sexual, uncontrollable woman who is a racial 'Other' hybrid with foreign wealth.[55]

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[53] Upon first meeting Rochester, Jane describes him as possessing "a dark face, with stern features and a heavy brow" (104); he has "great, dark eyes" (120).

[54] Blanche Ingram has "raven ringlets, the oriental eye" (146) and is described as both "dark as a Spaniard" (156) and compared to "some Israelitish princess" (166).

[55] Bertha's father, "a West India planter and merchant," provided Rochester with the "wealthy marriage" he needed, as Rochester explains to Jane in his retelling of his time in Jamaica (Brontë 273). Rochester is certainly attracted to Bertha's wealth, but foreign wealth always poses a threat to the colonizer. Rochester is also attracted to exoticism as evidenced from his many liaisons with foreign women. Also worth noting is the fact that all three of the 'dark' characters—Rochester, Blanche Ingram, and Bertha Mason—are wealthy and depicted as morally inferior to the characters with fair complexions. Only Bertha, however, is described as non-English, which is a key difference.

As a character who can be seen as a victim as much as she is a hysterical madwoman, she is compelling and complex, yet everything we know about Bertha is filtered through other characters' perceptions of her. She is at first a mysterious noise, then a fearsome ghost, and finally a crazed, homicidal pyromaniac, yet she possesses no voice of her own beyond the shrieks and wails that echo through Thornfield Hall. Because her 'Otherness' is central to her identity, the fact that she is of mixed origins is among the first details revealed about her. In the letter from her brother that identifies her, she immediately is identified as an English/Creole hybrid 'Other.' Her racial 'Otherness,' however, is evident much earlier, as Jane's description of Bertha's appearance is filled with racial undertones:

> Fearful and ghastly to me—oh, sir, I never saw a face like it! It was a discoloured face—it was a savage face. I wish I could forget the roll of the red eyes and the fearful blackened inflation of the lineaments! (Brontë 254).

Her complexion is so dark that Jane describes it as "purple," and her "lips [are] swelled and dark" (Brontë 254). Bertha's black hair, dark complexion, and thick lips, according to Meyer, associate Bertha as "insistently and stereotypically . . . non-white" (Meyer 254). Jane describes her face as "savage," which would suggest an association not just with Africans but with the "wild men" described by Blumenbach.[56] Together, the descriptions—a "discoloured face," "red eyes," and "blackened . . . lineaments"—suggest more than just a metaphorical blackness that can be explained by Bertha's madness or

[56] In his writings, Blumenbach discusses the "wild men" separately from the five race categories. He briefly notes the "unfortunate children" who remain uncultivated and for whom "hard necessity has so perverted their human nature" so that they have become "anthropomorphous creatures, who are so like beasts, to the *homines monstrosi* of Linnaeus" (129). Such conclusions about the degenerate nature of uncivilized groups is eventually used to support colonization as necessary acts of kindness, bringing the gift of civilization to the uncivilized so that men do not become monsters.

moral corruption or the Jamaican climate. By the time of this first encounter, Bertha has lived in England for ten years. According to Lawrence, her coloring, if she is fully European, would have changed to reflect the change in climate. Jane's observations of Bertha, whom she takes to be a ghost or a vampire, establish Bertha's racial 'Otherness' long before we know her name or her Creole background.

It is during Rochester's public confession, though, that Bertha comes to fully embody the stereotypes associated with female racial 'Others.' Rochester claims that she "came of a mad family; idiots and maniacs through three generations"; however, it was "[h]er mother, the Creole, [who] was both a madwoman and a drunkard" (Brontë 262). Bertha's negative behaviors are, therefore, inherited from her mother, from her Creole half, much in the same way the children of slaves inherit their race from their mothers, a practice first established by a 1662 Virginia law, which allowed white slave owners to abuse their female slaves and to profit from the incidental offspring they may father, which would in turn increase their count of slaves and their wealth (Billings 57). When Bertha is finally revealed to the horrified guests, she has been built up as truly monstrous, and her animalistic appearance serves to reinforce their horror at the sight of such a gruesome, dark 'Other':

> In the deep shade, at the further end of the room, a figure ran backwards and forwards. What it was, whether beast or human being, one could not, at first sight, tell: it grovelled, seemingly, on all fours; it snatched and growled like some strange wild animal: but it was covered with clothing, and a quantity of dark, grizzled hair, wild as a mane, hid its head and face. (Brontë 262-63)

While the animalistic movements and descriptions reinforce Bertha's insanity for Rochester's audience, readers can also see the reinforcement of racial stereotypes in her behaviors. She seems feral, inhuman in the way she moves and reacts to people. She is something less than human in these descriptions, beastly and savage, much in the way scientists like Blumenbach and Lawrence describe the "darker" races when they succumb to their worst tendencies. Furthermore, her "dark, grizzled hair" which is "wild as a mane" is in line with the hair texture descriptions of Blumenbach's work.

Despite the racial ambiguity and the fact that she is described in explicitly racial terms, Bertha's hybridity can be seen as a threat in and of itself, regardless of whether Bertha's mother was a white Creole or black Creole. Historian Ann Stoler argues that interracial unions were seen as one of the greatest threats in colonial Southeast Asia," as well as other colonial holdings; "Mixed-race children, cultural hybridities, were viewed as particularly destabilizing and threatening to cultural and national identity" (Stoler, "Sexual Affronts" 344). Cultural and national identity are just as important as racial identity, which makes Bertha a threat to Englishness, not just whiteness. Stoler also explains that hybridities were often viewed as a type of contagion, the idea that Europeanness, or in this case Englishness, "could be irremediably 'sullied' through sexual, moral and affective contact and fundamentally transformed" (Stoler, "Racial Histories" 199). Thomas specifically explores the function of whiteness in the novel and explains that "[i]n the racial formation of the British Empire whiteness was not a homogenous category. There were hierarchies which placed various non-white peoples in relation to white peoples and to each other on civilizational scales" (*Imperialism*, Thomas 51). Therefore, Bertha's exact race is less significant than the fact that she is a foreign-

born, non-English hybrid, which is ultimately a threat to pure Englishness. It is for these reasons that so much emphasis is placed on Bertha's racial 'Otherness,' but it is not race alone that results in her Othering. Bertha's gender, race, and mental state, all negative marks against her that situate her as 'Other,' all come from her Creole half, which makes *creole* a stand-in for any kind of muddled, impurity that sullies the preferable whiteness associated with Englishness.

What makes Bertha so problematic, then, is not merely her race but her sexuality, which when seen as a symptom of her madness is just as threatening as her race. Maryanne C. Ward notes that understanding contemporary views of Bertha's inheritance from her mother is essential to understanding Bertha; she argues that "Bertha's madness is not a result of racial, but of sexual inheritance, the result of being the heiress to a family corrupted by the nature of their livelihood" (Ward 19). Because she inherits her negative personality traits from her mother, there is an explicit link between race and sexuality that manifests in insanity. Likewise, her animalistic nature also weaves together insanity, sexuality, and racial Otherness. In *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution 1770-1823*, David Brion Davis notes that "the godless character of West Indian society made it easy to perceive slavery as a product of irregulation and infidelity, closely linked to the sins of intemperance, profanity, and shameless sexuality" (203). Bertha embodies all of those traits, and because she is part of West Indian society, that depravity is, by Davis' standards, deeply ingrained in her. When Rochester privately provides Jane with the details of how Bertha came to be his wife, he claims that, after four years with Bertha, she quickly devolved as "her vices sprang up fast and rank":

> they were so strong, only cruelty could check them, and I would not use cruelty. What a pigmy intellect she had, and what giant propensities! How fearful were the curses those propensities entailed on me! Bertha Mason, the true daughter of an infamous mother, dragged me through all the hideous and degrading agonies which must attend a man bound to a wife at once intemperate and unchaste. (Brontë 274)

This oversexed female 'Other' calls to mind the way African women have been depicted in caricature, from the 'Hottentot Venus' Sarah Baartman[57] to twenty-first century African-American women,[58] who are depicted as voluptuous and uncontrollably sexual but also masculine and animalistic. The diminished mental capacity also directly correlates to nineteenth century stereotypes about Africans, and especially slaves.

Worth noting, however, is the fact that details of Bertha's insanity and depravity come from Rochester, the would-be bigamist who is attempting to regain Jane's affections. Rochester tries and fails to rid himself of his undesirable wife, but doctors determine that "her excesses had prematurely developed the germs of insanity," a diagnosis that is presented in order to evoke sympathy for Rochester rather than for Bertha (Brontë 275). Ward notes that "Rochester's characterization of Bertha as not only mad, but also 'intemperate and unchaste' is an extravagant description, part of

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[57] Also called Saartjee Baartman, a woman who was displayed as both "an image of exotic, voluptuous allure" as well as "a monstrosity, an aberration of nature, a grotesque freak" (Solly et al. 133). The exploitation of Baartman emphasized her "protruding buttocks" and her genitalia so that she "was reduced to her sexual parts" both in life and in death, as she was dissected and displayed for the amusement of the masses (Gilman 213). Baartman is now "known to be the original icon of Black female sexuality" (White 611).

[58] Notable African American women—including Missy Ellioty, Nicki Minaj, Beyonce, and Kim Kardashian—have drawn comparisons as modern-day Hottentot Venuses. This comparison draws a link between their voluptuous figures and hypersexual personas reminiscent of the colonial commodification of the black female body. However, figures like Nicki Minaj embrace the comparison and see it as a form of empowerment (White).

Rochester's self-justification as he seeks to win Jane's sympathy" (Ward 19). He is a victim, both of his wife's madness and her infidelity, while his own extramarital indiscretions are excused as the reasonable and justifiable actions of a man caught in such an inescapable predicament. Boys will be boys, after all, and men like Rochester have needs that must be met, if not by a legal wife then by any woman who might be willing to fill the role. Rochester's confession, then, is more about situating himself as a victim: "You shall see what sort of a being I was cheated into espousing," he tells his shocked guests once his deceit is uncovered, "and judge whether or not I had a right to break the compact, and seek sympathy with something at least human" (Brontë 262). He expects his audience to sympathize with him, to see him as the hapless victim of a mad wife and, as a result, excuse his dishonesty and attempted bigamy. Bertha's needs as a woman are inconsequential, evidence of madness, and clearly contrast to the rational, respectable Victorian man who demands his wife be docile and submissive.

For Rochester, Jamaica is the antithesis to England just as much as Bertha is the antithesis to Jane. His view as a colonizer is that only what is purely European can be good, a belief system that is symbolically depicted in his decision to leave Jamaica and return to England. On a "fiery West Indian night," Rochester is overcome with despair (Brontë 275). The West Indian climate is suffocating with "air like sulpher-steams," and Rochester decides he cannot endure anymore; he determines to escape from "the bottomless pit" and even briefly considers shooting himself to escape the emotional torture (Brontë 276). It is that moment that he is delivered from the West Indies by the purity of Europe:

> A wind fresh from Europe blew over the ocean and rushed through the open casement: the storm broke, streamed, thundered, blazed, and the air grew pure. I then framed and fixed a resolution . . . The sweet wind from Europe was still whispering in the refreshed leaves, and the Atlantic was thundering in glorious liberty; my heart, dried up and scorched for a long time, swelled to the tone, and filled with living blood—my being longed for renewal—my soul thirsted for a pure draught. I saw hope revive—and felt regeneration possible. (Brontë 276)

Rochester longs for deliverance from the West Indies and from his West Indian wife, and that deliverance comes in both the return to England and the Englishness of Jane. He then stashes his wife in an attic and pretends she does not exist while he searches for his "ideal of a woman," not necessarily perfection but "the antipodes of the Creole" (278-79). He instead takes on a string of mistresses before he finds Bertha's perfect antithesis in Jane. For Rochester, Bertha represents a lifetime of West Indian imprisonment, and Jane is English deliverance. Rochester is a victim of Bertha's madness, not the perpetrator of abuse.

Bertha' Triumphal Escape from the Attic

Through another lens, however, Bertha's behaviors are reminiscent of the treatment of powerful, strong-willed women who refuse to bend to patriarchal expectations; therefore, she emerges as a misunderstood feminist heroine. Unlike Jane, Bertha has no voice in the story, but her lack of intelligible language is part of what strengthens her as a heroine and sets her apart from Jane. Though Jane suffers bouts of madness and hysteria, has moments when she paces and crawls and rages, she is never silenced, never loses her ability to articulate and rationalize her otherwise irrational

hysteria, and therefore never loses her humanity or becomes a savage in the way that Bertha does. When Jane leaves Thornfield Hall following the revelation of Bertha Mason, she is "weeping wildly" and carries on "like one delirious"; she falls and then "[crawls] forwards on [her] hands and knees" (Brontë 288). Unlike Bertha, however, she is able to provide a moment of reflection about her emotions following her departure from Rochester and Thornfield Hall and is able to humanize the depths of her despair and anguish through language:

> [M]ay you never feel what I then felt! May your eyes never shed such stormy, scalding, heart-wrung tears as poured from mine. May you never appeal to Heaven in prayers so hopeless and so agonised as in that hour left my lips: for never may you, like me, dread to be the instrument of evil to what you wholly love. (Brontë 288)

Jane's language sets her apart from Bertha so that Jane is never seen as a beastly 'Other,' never a hysterical madwoman. In *Speculum of the Other Woman*, Irigaray claims that "'reasonable' words—to which in any case [a woman] has access only through mimicry—are powerless to translate all that pulses, clamors, and hangs hazily in the cryptic passages of hysterical suffering-latency" (142). To use language is to enter the patriarchal symbolic order, and Bertha rejects that. Irigaray explains that "Language, which like and yet quite unlike the mother's breast or her milk, is able to nourish but also to kill, rape, or poison the sexuate body of the child" (Irigaray 37). Bertha rejects such language, and thus, her language is inarticulate to the patriarchy and all those who have embraced the symbolic order. As a woman, she rejects masculine language for the mother tongue, a language that is guttural and visceral, a language of fire and rebellion that is far

more powerful though untranslatable for all who exist in the symbolic order. There is a dangerous power in Bertha's refusal to move into patriarchal language.

Patriarchal society has no idea how to deal with a Bertha Mason, so women like her often end up demonized, cast out from society, even institutionalized. In madness, she occupies a liminal space that is uncontrollable and threatening to the order of the patriarchy. Such liminality encompasses not only Bertha's insanity but also her hybridity, a cultural threat to Englishness that is just as abhorrent as is her sexual threat to the patriarchy. The intersectionality of her gender and race compound the threat that Bertha poses, to Rochester specifically and to the English patriarchy in general. Regardless, Bertha Mason can be seen as a champion for the misunderstood, the oppressed, the imprisoned. And even if "the darkness with which Jane consistently associates Bertha is mostly metaphorical, this metaphorical implication is reinforced by the material evidence of Bertha's body and of the space she lives in" (McKee 70). If she truly serves primarily as a contrast to Jane, then "whiteness assumes identity as an abstract, disembodied quality—of spirit and of mind—white 'dark' persons are defined by material and bodily properties" (McKee 68). Jane is the white, pure spirit who is transcendent despite all that she endures while Bertha embodies darkness, insanity, impurity, Otherness. However, Jane's own gender revolution depicted by the ending of the novel, which "redistributes wealth and equalizes gender power," relies on the "cleaning away [of] Bertha, the staining dark woman who has represented oppression" (Meyer 266). It is Bertha, Meyer argues, who cleanses the impurities of patriarchy and colonial rule in her fiery farewell to Thornfield Hall and the oppressive attic that imprisoned her for a decade.

Bertha's final act, then, seems to be a reflection of what Irigaray describes in *Speculum* as the woman's attempt to escape and transcend the logical structure of the patriarchy, an act of feminine heroism that is fiery and destructive but also restorative:

> This is the place where consciousness is no longer master, where, to its extreme confusion, it sinks into a dark night that is also fire and flames. This is the place where 'she' . . . speaks about the dazzling glare which comes from the source of light that has been logically repressed, about 'subject' and 'Other' flowing out into an embrace of fire that mingles one term into another, about contempt for form as such, about mistrust for understanding as an obstacle along the path of jouissance and mistrust for the dry desolation of reason. (Irigaray 191)

Bertha's language is her 'Otherness,' expressed through rebellion and fire much in the same way as slave rebellions used fire to fight back against patriarchal colonial rule. Her act of rebellion serves to cleanse the impurity, and in that act, she is heroic. Jane, as a white woman, takes over Bertha's voice and embodies the role of a feminist icon that can be accepted and championed. Rochester is able to see his mistreatment of Jane with a clarity that he never has with Bertha. Jane, therefore, is a much more palatable feminist icon than Bertha ever could be, much in the same way that white actresses have been able to propel the #MeToo movement into the mainstream in a way that the black women who began the movement could not. Bertha's intersectionality as both female and a racial hybrid make her a compelling figure, even if her existence and the colonial undertones of the novel only serve the purpose of metaphorical representation of social issues in Victorian Britain. Though she has long been viewed as a foil to Jane, the circumstances of her illness, her rejection, her imprisonment, and even her final act of suicide, make her

a feminist heroine worthy of notice. Bertha breaks free from the constraints, both physical and mental, and takes control of her own fate. She is a fighter who refuses to submit to the will of the man who seeks to control her. She may be doomed, but in her final blaze of glory, she serves as a warning, both to the men who might seek to cage a Bertha Mason and to the women who might one day become her.

We can see echoes of Bertha in the #MeToo era as women call men to account for the sins of their past. We can also see echoes of Bertha in women who are chastised as they take on positions of power in both the corporate and political worlds. These women have turned male criticisms into rallying cries for social change, modern-day Bertha Masons who are not content to stay in the attic. During the third presidential debate of the 2016 election, Donald Trump called Hillary Clinton a "nasty woman,"[59] a phrase which now adorns women's t-shirts. When Mitch McConnell explained his decision to silence and rebuke[60] Senator Elizabeth Warren, he said "She was warned. She was given an explanation. Nevertheless, she persisted"; like "Nasty Woman," the phrase "Nevertheless, she persisted" became yet another instance of women taking the rebukes of men and turning them into a "battle cry" for female empowerment (Wang). The Rochesters of the world are taking note and fighting back, however. One might see echoes of Rochester in a figure like Justice Brett Kavanaugh, who positioned himself as a victim even as Christine Blassey Ford provided compelling, damning testimony about the sexual abuse she suffered at his hands.[61] There are also female apologists like

[59] Clinton was talking about raising taxes on the wealthy when Donald Trump interjected, "Such a nasty woman," according to the full transcript (Politico Staff).

[60] Senator Warren was giving a speech criticizing then-Attorney General Jeff Sessions (Wang).

[61] In his opening statement, Kavanaugh said of the Blassey-Ford hearings, "This has destroyed my good name. A good name built up through decades of very hard work and public service at the highest levels of the American government" (*New York Times* staff).

Conservative pundit Tomi Lahren, who often decries feminism as a blight on the American family and launches attacks against women seeking positions of power.[62] Powerful women are still too often called hysterical if they are passionate and unfeminine if they command attention or wield authority over men. Women of color especially are still dehumanized, sexualized, and criticized, as are the four freshman congresswomen known as 'the Squad.'[63] Women, however, are fighting back, refusing to back down. Bertha Masons around the world are escaping their own attics, burning down the patriarchy, one hashtag at a time.

[62] Tomi Lahren claimed that 2020 Democratic presidential contender Kamala Harris "slept her way to the top," though she later apologized for her remarks (Heil).

[63] Rashida Talib, Ayanna Pressley, Alexandria Ocasio-Coretez, and Ilhan Omar are four Democratic Representatives elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 2018 who have attracted the ire of President Trump and many male conservative TV personalities (Samuels).

CHAPTER IV

'A Dark-Skinned Gipsy': The Psychological Effects of Childhood Trauma and Racial Discrimination in *Wuthering Heights*

For decades, politicians in the United States have been arguing about the issue of immigration, particularly immigration at the Southern Border. In recent years, however, the crisis has reached a fever pitch, and new zero-tolerance policies have led to overcrowding in detention centers and a backlog in the immigration courts. The growing immigration crisis has been further exacerbated by a policy of family separation, which has led to harsh, unimaginable conditions suffered by the children of immigrants and asylum-seekers attempting to enter the United States. Descriptions and images[64] from the detention facilities are harrowing: young children, separated from their parents, are caged like animals and largely neglected by the guards. Though the conditions in the detention centers for both adults and children are troubling from a human rights perspective, the separation policy raises additional concerns regarding the psychological development of children and the impact of traumatic experiences in childhood. Although psychologists have not yet directly studied the impact of the separation policy, studies[65] on immigrants and refugees have revealed that long separations from parents can result in an increase in

[64] In *The New Yorker* article "Inside a Texas Building Where the Government is Holding Immigrant Children," Isaac Chotiner recounts the conditions as described by lawyers seeking to ensure the safety and well-being of the children: "flu and lice outbreaks were going untreated, and children were filthy, sleeping on cold floors, and taking care of one another because of the lack of attention from guards."

[65] In an article published by the American Psychological Association, Heather Stringer notes that psychologists are taking note of the mental health crisis that arises from family separation policies. Such studies include Suárez-Orozco, et al., "I Felt Like My Heart Was Staying Behind: Psychological Implications of Family Separations & Reunifications for Immigrant Youth"; Lisseth Rojas-Flores, et al., "Trauma and psychological distress in Latino citizen children following parental detention and deportation"; and Alexander Miller, et al., "Understanding the mental health consequences of family separation for refugees: Implications for policy and practice."

depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). One study[66] measured twenty-seven types of trauma experienced by refugees and found that family separation was one of only two types of trauma that impacted all three measures of refugees' mental health. The only other type of trauma that has that level of psychological impact is physical assault such as beatings and torture.

One might see parallels between the psychological trauma experienced by twenty-first century immigrant and refugee children and Heathcliff, the abandoned child at the center of Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*. Heathcliff enters the Earnshaw family as an orphan of unknown origins who is entirely stripped of his language, his name, and his identity. He is adopted by the well-meaning Mr. Earnshaw and given a new name and a new language, but his 'Otherness'[67] cannot be altered by a new name. Though the traumas Heathcliff suffers in his early years are unknown, the trauma he experiences when his adoptive father dies and he is left to the care of his abusive adoptive brother are well-documented in the novel. In fact, every character who encounters Heathcliff, save Earnshaw and Catherine, view him as inferior because of the stereotypes they associate with his physical appearance. Even when Heathcliff returns as a self-made man of means, he cannot shake the 'Otherness' that defines him. The psychological and physical abuse that Heathcliff suffers throughout his childhood, which stem from jealousy and racial discrimination, directly impacts his ability to form healthy relationships as an adult. In grasping for the subject position denied him in childhood, Heathcliff becomes the very

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[66] Alexander Miller et al., "Understanding the mental health consequences of family separation for refugees: Implications for policy and practice"

[67] Heathcliff's 'Otherness' stems primarily from his racial difference. As Bhabha notes, "the exercise of colonial power through discourse demands an articulation of forms of difference" (150). Heathcliff's 'Othering' is articulated in various ways in the novel, which the first part of this essay seeks to explore.

thing he hates: the colonized becomes the colonizer, and as a result, Heathcliff becomes an antisocial personality who continues the cycle of violence and abuse within his own family.

Heathcliff as Racial 'Other'

From the moment of his arrival at Wuthering Heights, Heathcliff is established as a non-European 'Other' who poses a threat to the Earnshaw family structure. Earnshaw introduces him "as a gift of God; though it's as dark almost as if it came from the devil" (Brontë 51). The rest of the family, though, does not view Heathcliff as a gift. He is immediately rejected, the first of many rejections in his life, by all other members of the household: his would-be adoptive mother is "ready to fling [him] out of doors" and asks her husband "how he could fashion to bring that gipsy brat into the house"; the Earnshaw children, when they realize their new brother has cost them their promised toys, "refused to have it in bed with them, or even in their room"; and even Nelly, who is the most maternal character in the novel, is terrified by the appearance of the "dirty, ragged, black-haired child" and "put him on the landing of the stairs, hoping it might be gone on the morrow" (51). Heathcliff immediately represents a threat both to patriarchy and empire, a destabilizing figure who occupies a liminal space, simultaneously within and without, that threatens the family structure at Wuthering Heights and the social structure of England.

Heathcliff's exact origins, who he is before he enters Wuthering Heights, are almost entirely unknown. His backstory fills only half of a sentence in the narrative: Earnshaw found Heathcliff "starving, houseless, and as good as dumb, in the streets of Liverpool, where he picked it up and inquired for its owner" (51). The only other

information regarding Heathcliff's history prior to his arrival at Wuthering Heights comes from Mr. Linton, the owner of Thrushcross Grange. When he first meets the young Heathcliff, he refers to Heathcliff as "that strange acquisition my late neighbor made in his journey to Liverpool—a little Lascar, or an American or Spanish castaway" (Brontë 62). Several critics[68] point to these details as evidence that Heathcliff is a product of the slave trade. Maja-Lisa von Sneidern details Liverpool's history as a slave port and explains that "[b]y 1764 Liverpool boasted more than twice the number of vessels engaged in the triangular trade than Bristol, and by 1804 Liverpool merchants were responsible for more than eighty-four percent of the British transatlantic slave trade" (172). Both von Sneidern and Susan Meyer observe that the timeline[69] of the novel makes possible that "the dark-skinned child arrived in Liverpool as a result of the trade for which the city was most famous in the late eighteenth century" (Meyer 98). Heathcliff is dehumanized, referred to as 'it' rather than 'he' when he first enters the Earnshaw household, suggesting that he is a property to be owned rather than a human child. When Earnshaw first finds Heathcliff, "he picked it up and inquired for its owner" (Brontë 52) and Linton calls Heathcliff "a strange acquisition" (62) rather than an adopted child, both of which allude to the slave trade. Matthew Beaumont notes that the "objectivication of Heathcliff underlines Emily Brontë's hint that he may be some by-product of the British slave trade, which wasn't abolished until 1808, several years after the most recent events

[68] Most notably, Maja-Lisa von Sneidern ("*Wuthering Heights* and the Liverpool Slave Trade"); Susan Meyer ("'Your Father Was Emperor of China, and Your Mother an Indian Queen': Reverse Imperialism in *Wuthering Heights*"); H.L. Malchow ("Frankenstein's Monster and Images of Race in Nineteenth-Century Britain"); and Matthew Beaumont ("Heathcliff's Great Hunger: The Cannibal Other in Wuthering Heights").

[69] Nelly, in recounting a particular story from 1778, states that Catherine was fifteen (74) and estimates that Heathcliff is sixteen (76). Catherine "was hardly six years old" when Heathcliff first arrived (51), which means Earnshaw found Heathcliff in 1769.

to be narrated in the novel" (Beaumont 142). Meyer also notes, however, that Linton's *lascar* reference could imply that Heathcliff is "the child of one of the Indian seamen, termed lascars, recruited by the East India Company to replace members of the British crews who died on exposure to disease in India or in military encounters" (98). The lascars filled the streets of port cities, starving and destitute, as they waited for the next ship to take them home. In both possible instances, slave or lascar, Heathcliff fills the role of dark 'Other' from some colonized part of the world, which is exactly how his is treated when he arrives in the English countryside.

The physical descriptions of Heathcliff also support the conclusions that he is a dark, non-European 'Other.' When he is first introduced to the family, Nelly describes him as a "dirty, ragged, black-haired child" (Brontë 51). Though the darkness associated with Heathcliff is sometimes more related to his personality and demeanor, the fact that he has a darker-than-English complexion is explicit. In the novel, however, Heathcliff is most commonly referred to specifically as a Gypsy.[70] When Lockwood first meets Heathcliff on his first visit to Wuthering Heights, he notes that Heathcliff "is a dark-skinned gipsy in aspect, in dress and manners a gentleman" (Brontë 27). Heathcliff is called a "gipsy" by Mrs. Earnshaw, his adoptive mother (51), Hindley, his adoptive brother (54), Mrs. Linton, a person of high social standing (62), Isabella,[71] his future wife (62), Joseph, a servant (92), and Edgar, his rival (98). Meyer dismisses the Gypsy

[70] The term *gypsy* is used here rather than *Roma* or *Romani* because that is the term most commonly used in nineteenth-century England. The term *gypsy* derives from the fact that many "erroneously thought [Gypsies had] come from Egypt," but there is also "a conflation of Gypsies with an Orientalized, eroticised other" (Bardi 44). Grellmann, writing in 1787, speculates about the origins of the Gypsies, but he concludes that "they did not originate in our quarter of the World"; instead, he surmises that Gypsies are "Oriental figures, either from Egypt, Asia Minor, or some other part" (Grellmann 93). In the nineteenth-century discourse regarding Gypsies in England, the terms *Roma* and *Romani* are not used.

[71] Isabella's does not directly call Heathcliff a gypsy, but she alludes to gypsies when she says, "He's exactly like the son of the fortune-teller, that stole my tame pheasant" (62).

references as as "generic designation for a dark-complexioned alien in England" (Meyer 97); however, the Gypsy trope is prevalent enough in Victorian literature to justify exploring Heathcliff's possible background as a Gypsy. Historians David Mayall[72] and Janet Lyon[73] both note that one aspect of the *gadže* (non-Romani) image of the Gypsy is of a romanticized nomadic lifestyle free from the constraints of civilized society;[74] the other more pervasive view of gypsies, however, is that of a lawless, deceitful community of people who possess "a radical alterity that might be anti-statist or anti-Christian or just plain criminal in origin" (Lyon 518). Mayall notes that Gypsies have been a focus and concern of politicians, writers, and artists in England since the sixteenth century and "have been portrayed and defined as being of separate, foreign or alien stock and as being just one unremarkable part of an indigenous, vagrant and vagabond population" (Mayall 57). Such views of non-European racial groups "provided the rationale and justification for social inequalities much as it performed the same function for imperialism" (Mayall 110). Like colonized groups, gypsies in England are marginalized and 'Othered' through a body of political, social, and literary discourse that promotes a negative view of non-Europeans. As a mobile, migrant population, gypsies do not adhere to the nation-state model, which leads to their 'othering' within nations.

In his "Dissertation on the Gipsies," first translated into English in 1787, Heinrich Grellmann provides the first detailed research on Gypsies as possessing their own racial

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[72] *Gypsy Identities 1500-2000: From Egipcyans and Moon-men to the Ethnic Romany* is an extensive study of the 500-year history of gypsies.

[73] In "Gadže Modernism," Lyon traces this history of the gypsy image as it is used and understood by non-Romanis.

[74] This romanticized view of the gypsy lifestyle is illustrated in Matthew Arnold's poem, "The Scholar-Gipsy."

identity. He describes the origins and appearance of Gypsies, but in the eighth chapter of his treatise, Grellmann delves into the character[75] of the Gypsy:

> Imagine people of a childish way of thinking; their minds filled with raw, undigested conceptions; guided more by sense than reason; using understanding and reflection so far only as they promote the gratification of any particular appetite; and you have a perfect sketch of the Gipsies character. (Grellmann 65)

He says of Gypsies that they are "void of the least emotion of gratitude, frequently rewarding benefits with the most insidious malice" (65); furthermore, "they are cruel" by nature and their "[d]esire of revenge often causes them to take the most desperate … resolutions" that result in an extreme violence in anger (66). Grellmann also notes that Gypsies are childish, restless, and possess no desire for education, which is, he concludes, "why the Gipsey race has never produced a learned man, nor ever will as long as they retain these principles" (69). Vernon Morwood, writing in *Victoria Magazine* in 1867, notes that gypsies are largely godless people who "are shrouded in moral darkness and under the blight of spiritual death" (Morwood 504). Of their physical appearance, however, he describes Gypsy men as being "of middle stature, well made and muscular, remarkably upright and full-chested," and notes that even three or four hundred years after their immigration to England, they "are almost as distinct a race now as they were then" (Morwood 292). The Gypsy figure in nineteenth century is quite clearly considered a non-English outsider; however, because gypsies have a history in England that dates

[75] Grellmann's work, focused solely on gypsies, can be seen as a precursor to William Lawrence's more extensive efforts to assign moral characteristics to Blumenbach's five race groups. In fact, many of the negative moral characteristics Grellmann assigns to gypsies, such as childishness and cruelty, mirror the characteristics attributed by Lawrence to the "darker races."

back to the sixteenth century, they are also an insider 'Other' who pose a much more present danger than a colonized 'Other' from a foreign land.

In literature, the Gypsy figure can serve several narrative purposes. As Bardi[76] explains, the Gypsy trope is often employed in the nineteenth century in order to "enable the dislocation of social mores and the deconstruction of accepted notions of gender and sexuality, and ultimately, of race, class and empire" (Bardi 48). Likewise, Nord[77] argues that "[t]he temporary and ambiguous gypsy identities" used by women writers in the nineteenth century "help to establish the *heroine's* exoticism and unorthodox femininity" (Nord, "Marks of Race" 195). The Gypsy figure represents a contrast to the strictures of English society: the Gypsy's "impetuousness, brooding, and passion" serves as a stark contrast to the "English reserve, decorousness, and control" (Nord 190). Equating an English female heroine—in the case of Catherine, the comparison extends beyond similarity and into the realm of sameness[78]—to the Gypsy figure allows the heroine to break free from the constraints of societal expectations associated with class and gender. However, the parallels between Heathcliff's depiction in the novel and the contemporary racial stereotypes of gypsies suggest that Brontë's use of the term is more than merely a convenient way of signifying Heathcliff's 'Otherness' or providing Catherine with a means of escaping societal expectations. As evidenced throughout the novel, Heathcliff is depicted as childish, cruel, vengeful, and morally questionable, all of which are indicative

[76] In the article, "'In Company of a Gipsy': The 'Gypsy' as Trope in Woolf and Brontë," Abby Bardi explores the gypsy figure in Woolf's *Orlando* and Charlotte Brontë's *Villette*. Though she does not explicitly discuss Heathcliff as a gypsy figure, much of her argument regarding the gypsy trope applies.

[77] Nord, in "'Marks of Race': Gypsy Figures and Eccentric Femininity in Nineteenth-Century Women's Writing," also zeroes in on the figurative role of the gypsy figure.

[78] Catherine famously says, "Nelly, I *am* Heathcliff," and claims that "he's more myself than I am" (Brontë 88).

of the nineteenth-century stereotypes of the Gypsy. He also embodies the wild, untamed passion represented by the nomadic lifestyle of the Gypsy. Furthermore, the "olive or tawny-coloured flesh, black hair, [and] dark eyes" (Mayall 132), as well as the broad shoulders, muscular frame, and full chest that constitute the most frequent description of gypsies is an exact match to Heathcliff's physical description.[79] Even the way Nelly describes Heathcliff's language as "gibberish that nobody could understand" (Brontë 51) further equates Heathcliff with gypsies: early gypsiologists[80] assumed the Gypsy language was fabricated rather than "a consistent and codified language" (Nord, *Gypsies* 21). Such parallels that go beyond the figurative set up Heathcliff as the type of stranger who, as Bhopal and Myers[81] explain, "becomes a source of anxiety for wider society" because of "his ability to disrupt the ordinariness of everyday life" as the "exotic visitor who moves into the house next door" (Bhopal and Myers 2). Heathcliff is the worst kind of stranger: not the colonized 'Other' from another land, but the colonized 'Other' within, the stranger in the house. If Heathcliff is a Gypsy rather than an African slave or a lascar orphan, then he becomes much more terrifying as the 'Other' within, one who infiltrates the English family structure, and by extension England as a nation, in order to bring about its downfall, the nineteenth-century version of a sleeper cell terrorist.[82] Of course, the lack of

[79] Worth noting, however, is that the skin color and eye color described also matches Blumenbach's observations of Americans and Malays (Blumenbach 394).

[80] In the second chapter of his book, David Mayall traces the history of gypsy studies, which is "sometimes referred to as Gypsiology or Tsiganology" (24). Mayall explains that "[s]uch labels as 'Gypsy studies' and 'Gypsiologists' serve the purpose of conveying a degree of academic respectability and purpose to an area which has largely operated in the fringes of mainstream academic activity," and the term has been in use since the late nineteenth century (24-25).

[81] In *Insiders, outsiders and others: Gypsies and identity*, Bhopal and Myers trace this history of gypsies in the United Kingdom, particularly the way they function as both insiders and outsiders in places that they have occupied for hundreds of years.

[82] In *The Gothic, Postcolonialism and Otherness*, Tabish Khair dedicates an entire chapter, titled "Heathcliff as Terrorist," to this concept of Heathcliff as a sleeper agent who lays dormant until he finds the right moment to attack.

explicit information about his origins precludes any definitive conclusions about Heathcliff's race. He may be many things, and whether slave or lascar orphan or Gypsy, Heathcliff is a dark 'Other' who threatens the class structure of England: both the landed farming class, represented by the Earnshaws, and the landed gentry, represented by the Lintons. As a Gypsy figure, though, Heathcliff becomes much more problematic for a nineteenth-century reader who might fear the very kind of disorder and disruption that Heathcliff brings to the Earnshaws and Lintons. The Gypsy figure defies borders as well as all forms of national order: religion, society, and government. Because gypsies live in isolation, they maintain an identity separate from national identity, even centuries after they migrate to a nation like England. In prioritizing community over religious order, community over social order, community over political order, the Gypsy poses a threat to religious and socio-political institutions. Heathcliff the Gypsy, therefore, embodies disruption at every level for the nineteenth-century reader.

Through Heathcliff, Brontë sets up, and criticizes to some extent, the connection between race and moral characteristics, first established by William Lawrence,[83] who used Blumenbach's five race classifications as the foundation of his own claims about race.[84] Lawrence, in his *Lectures on the Physiology, Zoology, and the Natural History of Man*, describes the "darker races," which would include all three possibilities for Heathcliff, as people who possess "inflexible cruelty, selfishness, and disposition to

[83] As previously noted, Grellmann's efforts to define the moral characteristics of gypsies predates Lawrence, but Lawrence's work was the first comprehensive effort to tie race to moral behavior.

[84] Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, known as the father of anthropology, first established four, and later five, race classifications in his lecture, *On the Natural Variety of Mankind*. As a race scientist, Blumenbach was interested in observing and classifying humans in the same way that Carolus Linneaus had with animals. However, Blumenbach's work was later used to justify slavery and colonialism and establish heirarchies among the races. Blumenbach's racial classifications are so ubiquitous by the nineteenth century that his conclusions about the "darker races" permeate literary depictions of racial 'Others.'

cheat; a want of all sympathetic impulses and feelings; the most brutal apathy and indolence, unless roused by the pressure of actual physical want, or stimulated by the desire of revenge and the thirst of blood" (Lawrence 411). Heathcliff certainly embodies such fears that are associated with dark 'Others': his appearance evokes a range of dangerous moral characteristics, including violence, dishonesty, lack of empathy, and his bloodthirsty quest for revenge. The assumption of evil based on appearance is most evident in Heathcliff's first encounter with the Lintons as they examine Heathcliff:

> 'Oh, my dear Mary, look here! don't be afraid, it is but a boy—yet, the villain scowls so plainly in his face, would it not be a kindness to the contrary to hang him at once, before he shows his nature in acts, as well as features?'
>
> He pulled me under the chandelier, and Mrs. Linton placed her spectacles on her nose and raised her hands in horror. The cowardly children crept nearer also, Isabella lisping—
>
> 'Frightful thing! Put him in the cellar, papa. He's exactly like the son of the fortune-teller, that stole my tame pheasant.' (Brontë 61-62)

In this scene, Heathcliff is examined like an animal or a science experiment, much in the same way that slaves are examined and scrutinized by slave owners or the way curiosities from around the world are put on display for the entertainment of the masses. The way the Lintons speak about him, rather than to him, only serves to dehumanize Heathcliff and reduce him to the status of an exotic oddity. Meyer notes that in this scene, "Heathcliff is subjected to the potent gaze of a racial arrogance deriving from British imperialism. In Heathcliff's dark face, the Lintons read his nature and his destiny, and they find in it a license to punish him for crimes of property putatively committed by

others of similar appearance" (Meyer 97). Meyer also notes, however, that Brontë is satirizing rather than affirming "the British desire to contain and control the 'dark races'" (Meyer 100). The Lintons' immediate reaction to Heathcliff is that he should be disposed of because of the threat he poses to their property and their safety. From their perspective, someone who looks like Heathcliff will become a problem eventually. Furthermore, Isabella's lisping suggestion that Heathcliff should be locked away based solely on his appearance reflects the way children learn and mimic the racism of their parents.

Nevertheless, Heathcliff comes to see himself through the colonial gaze, much in the same way that W.E.B. Du Bois describes double consciousness as "always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity" (Du Bois 9). When Catherine returns to Wuthering Heights after her stay at Thrushcross Grange, Heathcliff sees himself for the first time through Catherine's colonial gaze and views himself as inferior due to his dark skin. He wishes for "light hair and a fair skin," as well as wealth and social status, so that he can be more preferable to Catherine than her English suitor Edgar Linton (67). Nelly's response to Heathcliff's negative view of himself is not to deny the truth of how Heathcliff views himself but rather to suggest that he could overcome his undesirable appearance and unfortunate background:

> A good heart will help you to a bonny face, my lad, . . . if you were a regular black; and a bad one will turn the bonniest into something worse than ugly. And now that we've done washing, and combing, and sulking—tell me whether you don't think yourself rather handsome? I'll tell you, I do. You're fit for a prince in disguise. Who knows but your father was Emperor of China, and your mother an

> Indian queen, each of them able to buy up, with one week's income, Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange together? And you were kidnapped by wicked sailors and brought to England. Were I in your place, I would frame high notions of my birth; and the thoughts of what I was should give me courage and dignity to support the oppressions of a little farmer! (Brontë 67)

Nelly's recommendation to Heathcliff is that he could invent any backstory for himself since he does not know for sure. He could be royalty, but not European royalty, which confirms his racial 'Otherness.' Heathcliff may not be "a regular black," but he certainly is not a white European. Nelly, then, encourages Heathcliff to focus on the aspects of himself that he can change—his demeanor, his clothing, his cleanliness, and other external factors—rather than his race, which is fixed.

Despite Nelly's encouragement and Heathcliff's desire to be accepted, he cannot overcome the assumptions that people make based on his appearance. The imagery surrounding him evokes various stereotypes of colonized peoples: he is described as savage, beastly, and animalistic (27, 74, 104, 150, 155); compared to the devil (51, 54, 92, 131, 161, 246): and equated with vampires (141, 281) and cannibals (162, 234). Associating Heathcliff with Satan or the Devil plays on the light/dark, good/evil contrasts that also govern the way Europeans view dark 'Others.' If darkness is associated with evil and the devil, then dark skin must do the same.[85] Tabish Khair[86] explains that the image of "the Devil/Satan/Lucifer is the Original 'negative' Other in the earliest phase of British Gothic fiction" which supports the initial "Western notion of the absolute Other"

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[85] This follows the Western association of race and religious purity depicted in Medieval romances like *King of Tars* in which conversion to Christianity changes black skin to white.

[86] *The Gothic, Postcolonialism and Otherness: Ghosts from Elsewhere*

as "originally a theological one" (Khair 49). However, the association with Satan can also tie back to Heathcliff as a Gypsy figure: because "Gypsies were held to be largely areligious" (Lyon 522), the Gypsy can be viewed as a threat to the religious order much in the same way that they are a threat to the social order. Like Jews,[87] Gypsies are seen as explicitly anti-Christian,[88] which is why Heathcliff is often addressed as a Satanic figure, an "imp of Satan," (54) and a "faysome divil uf a gipsy" (92). This type of racism ties together Gypsies and Jews, not just in the nineteenth century, but into the twentieth century as well. Gypsies and Jews are both racial groups that isolate themselves and resist political and religious assimilation. Therefore, they are often discriminated against not only because they are racial 'Others' who threaten the political order but because they also threaten the religious order that undergirds the European class structure.

The allusions to vampires and cannibals serve to further develop Heathcliff as a terrifying threat, which "historically, has functioned in imperial discourse as the ultimate emblem of enlightened civilization's dark other" (Beaumont 139). Malchow explains that the image of the vampire carries an explicit connection to the bloodlust of racial 'Others':

> This Gothic image of frenzied blacks drinking the blood of their victims … is a common trope for a depraved and irrational lust for vengeance. It brings together two of the commonly supposed characteristics of the primitive: a manic preoccupation with avenging grievances and cannibalism. (Malchow 110)

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[87] Nord explains that some believed Gypsies descended from Ishmael, Abraham's son, who was destined to wander the earth and from whom the Prophet Muhammed traced his lineage, or one of the lost tribes of Israel that fled Egypt but never arrived in the promised land (Nord, *Gypsies* 21).

[88] Gypsies are also connected to magic and superstition, as seen in Isabella's association of Heathcliff and a gypsy fortune-teller (Brontë 62), and they are also viewed as anti-science.

Lawrence explicitly lists cannibalism, along with "[t]he barbarous treatment of women" and "the infernal torments inflicted on their captives," as distinct moral characteristics of the dark 'Other' (Lawrence 411). This imagery, therefore, carries with it a legitimate fear of 'Others' in Victorian England. However, a deeper fear that goes beyond the physical threat of the 'Other' exists in the image of the vampire or cannibal. For Meyer, these are supernatural images that carry with them "the imperialist's nightmare of being subjected to reverse colonization . . . of the violation of boundaries, and represents the fear, on the most immediately horrifying and personal and bodily level, of being invaded and used by another for his own purposes" (Meyer 119). Like Frankenstein's monster and Bertha Mason, Heathcliff embodies all of the fears associated with racial 'Others,' but he also wraps them in an even more terrifying package than the monster or the madwoman: he dons the mask of the colonizer and uses the weapons of capitalism for his own purposes.

Parallels of Race, Class, and Gender Oppression in *Wuthering Heights*

Because they experience similar challenges, oppressed groups often find solidarity with each other, and Catherine and Heathcliff certainly find solidarity in their mutual 'Otherness.' Malchow notes that "there is another level to the racial allusion" that "meshes class and gender" (Malchow 129). As Meyer explains, Brontë's novel "relentlessly explores the nature of forces external to, subordinated to, marginalized by, or excluded from the British social order," and does so by "invok[ing] the metaphorical link between white women and people of nonwhite races" (Meyer 100-01). Heathcliff, as the oppressed racial 'Other,' and Catherine, as the oppressed female 'Other,' find in each other a mutually-beneficial partnership. Heathcliff's arrival at the Heights disrupts empire through his racial 'Otherness' as well as patriarchy as he inspires Catherine to pursue her

own rebellious desire. Mr. Earnshaw's death allows them to transform into a unified whole, a shift in the Catherine-Heathcliff relationship from other to brother, or perhaps from other to self. According to Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar,[89] Catherine and Heathcliff "constitute an autonomous and androgynous . . . whole" because, as Heathcliff provides Catherine "with an extra body to lessen her female vulnerability, so she fills his need for a soul, a voice, a language with which to address cultured men like Edgar" (385). Heathcliff and Catherine, as children, function more as a singular person rather than two separate but equal parts. As Catherine merges with Heathcliff, she finds a "wholeness" of being in which she becomes "a perfect androgyne" called "Catherine-Heathcliff" (Gilbert and Gubar 350-351). This androgynous merging of the two takes place in the liminal space of the moors, the space between Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange, places that represent both patriarchal and colonial rule. It is to the moors that Catherine and Heathcliff escape to play together and hide from Hindley's wrath and Joseph's punishment, and there that they promise each other "to grow up as rude as savages" (Brontë 59). On the moors, their relationship exists in a semiotic state that is unspoken and undefined, completely outside of the language or structure of the symbolic order. However, the androgynous wholeness of Catherine-Heathcliff is ruptured by the crossing of a threshold in her own development: the aptly named Thrushcross Grange.

Gilbert and Gubar describe Catherine's entry into Thrushcross Grange as a "fall" from the freedom and autonomy of her youth into the conformity of her feminine role within the patriarchal symbolic order. They also note that she does not cross this

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[89] *Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*

threshold voluntarily but, rather, is violently attacked and then carried across the threshold by a male figure. Catherine and Heathcliff, locked out of Wuthering Heights for the evening, run across the moors and find themselves at Thrushcross Grange where Catherine is attacked by the bulldog, Skulker, "the first emissary of this heaven who greets them" and serves as "a sort of hellhound posing as a hound of heaven" (Gilbert and Gubar 358). Because she is barefoot, Catherine is particularly vulnerable to attack, and when the dog is "throttled off, his huge, purple tongue [is] hanging half a foot out of his mouth . . . his pendant lips [are] streaming with bloody slaver" (Brontë 61). Injured and bleeding, Catherine is carried over the threshold by a man, and Edgar observes "how her foot bleeds" when she enters Thrushcross Grange (Brontë 61). This is a violent crossing into womanhood with explicitly sexual connotations, including the phallic descriptions of Skulker's "huge, purple tongue" and "pendant lips," as well as the pubescent Catherine bleeding profusely. Julia Kristeva, in *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, discusses the significance of the female fear of being devoured by a dog, which connects the oral imagery of biting with the language of the symbolic order and, thus, metaphorically represents a fear of separation from the mother or Other. She also defines the image of blood as an "abjection" that "flows from within" and "suddenly becomes the sole 'object' of sexual desire" (*Power* 53). Consequently, Catherine's injuries essentially lead to her becoming a desired, sexual object within the symbolic order. In this same scene, Mrs. Linton speculates that Catherine might be "lamed for life!" (Brontë 46). Although she does physically heal from her wounds, the change that occurs most certainly follows her for the rest of her earthly life, and "[i]n a Freudian sense, then, the imagery of this brief but violent episode hints that Catherine has been simultaneously

catapulted into adult female sexuality *and* castrated" (Gilbert and Gubar 359).

The Lintons view Catherine as a young lady and willingly bring her into their home; they begin lavishing her with rich food, dressing her, and carrying her around like a doll. However, Heathcliff is banished, "thereby separating Catherine from her lover/brother who she herself defines as her strongest and most necessary 'self'" (Gilbert and Gubar 360). Catherine's Englishness, though, is more powerful than her female 'Otherness,' which is why she is able to cross the threshold and enter Thrushcross Grange while Heathcliff, the racial 'Other,' is rejected. When Catherine emerges from Thrushcross Grange after her five-week stay, she has transformed from "a wild, hatless little savage" into "a very dignified person" (Brontë 63). Catherine is brought in, domesticated, turned into "a lady," to the great delight of the patriarchy as represented by her brother Hindley. However, "Catherine's enclosure in this role is accompanied by a painful splitting of herself, a division of herself from her earlier 'savage' energies" (Meyer 105-06). Heathcliff, because he is left out of the great house and refused the civilization of the Lintons, is not split in the same way that Catherine is; therefore, he grows stronger rather than weaker as he claims power and agency. In a reversal of the trope in which a virginal white woman is violated and corrupted by the racial 'Other,' Catherine is corrupted and damaged by the white social order and her own self-denial while Heathcliff is able to thrive.

This reversal marks a key difference between Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* and other nineteenth-century novels by women writers who often employ the race metaphor as a vehicle for larger discussions on class and gender oppression. As Meyer argues, *Wuthering Heights* goes beyond a metaphorical treatment of race:

> In *Wuthering Heights* the energies embodied in the dark-skinned Heathcliff have a potency that exceeds the role of metaphor. In *Jane Eyre* the representative of the 'dark races' is killed off as the heroine lives on. But Heathcliff lives on, in *Wuthering Heights*, long after the white woman who claims identity with him, and his fictional longevity suggests his greater-than-metaphorical status in the novel. (103)

Heathcliff is able to occupy the subject position in a way that Bertha Mason cannot, and although the novel briefly treats the shared struggle of race and gender through Catherine and Heathcliff's relationship, the entire second half of the novel is focused on Heathcliff. Terry Eagleton argues that Heathcliff's "rise to power symbolizes at once the triumph of the oppressed over capitalism and the triumph of capitalism over the oppressed" (Eagleton 112); however, both Meyer and Khair counter that argument. Though they both agree class disparity plays a role in the novel, "[t]o read Heathcliff as simply a working man within a domestic context does not sufficiently account for his threatening power" through the "energies of resistance . . . in the 'dark races' beyond the margins of England" (Meyer 102). Heathcliff, the racial 'Other,' occupies the subject position in the novel, which is somewhat rare for a non-European character in a nineteenth-century novel. The subject position, however, comes at a cost. In his own self/other split, Heathcliff develops an awareness of his marginalized status as evidenced by his double consciousness; when Catherine returns, he sees himself for the first time as dirty and inferior. The loss of Catherine is perhaps a final trauma in a string of childhood traumas that Heathcliff endures, and although he survives, he is forever altered by the abuse and trauma of his childhood and early adolescence.

The Psychological Impact of Childhood Abuse and Racial Discrimination

Heathcliff suffers a string of social, emotional, and racial traumas throughout his childhood, beginning with his assumed abandonment in the streets of Liverpool and ending with the rejection of his self/Other when Catherine dismisses marriage to Heathcliff as degrading[90] and instead chooses to marry Edgar. Though he has suffered unknown trauma prior to Earnshaw finding him, his ability to connect with Catherine suggests that he has the potential to overcome whatever trauma he might have experienced on the streets of Liverpool. In the end, however, the additional trauma he faces, particularly Hindley's torture and Catherine's rejection, make impossible his recovery and ability to form healthy relationships. Essentially, the adult Heathcliff develops what the American Psychological Association calls antisocial personality disorder (ASP), described as "the presence of a chronic and pervasive disposition to disregard and violate the rights of others," which includes "repeated violations of the law, exploitation of others, deceitfulness, impulsivity, aggressiveness, reckless disregard for the safety of self and others, and irresponsibility, accompanied by a lack of guilt, remorse, and empathy" (APA). Though the definition provides a compelling possible diagnosis for the adult Heathcliff, the seven-year-old boy who enters Wuthering Heights is not yet an antisocial personality.

[90] Heathcliff overhears the conversation between Catherine and Nelly in which Catherine says, "It would degrade me to marry Heathcliff" (Brontë 86), but he leaves before Catherine continues to say that she loves him and claims identity with him as her most essential self (Brontë 86-88).

At the hands of Hindley, Heathcliff experiences a type of childhood maltreatment that a study by Michael D. De Bellis[91] concludes leads to serious mental illness. As soon as Earnshaw dies and Hindley assumes control of the family, he projects all of his own feelings of abandonment and betrayal by his father onto Heathcliff, who had been Earnshaw's favorite. Hindley is, in a way, rejected by his own father for another: Heathcliff is Earnshaw's clear "favourite," especially toward the end of Earnshaw's life when he desired only the presence of Heathcliff to the exclusion of all others, most especially Hindley (Brontë 54-55). If the favoritism Heathcliff enjoys serves as "rich nourishment to the child's pride and black tempers" (Brontë 54-55), then Hindley is determined to overcorrect once he becomes head of the household. Immediately upon his return, Hindley "drove [Heathcliff] from their company to the servants, deprived him of the instructions of the curate, and insisted that he should labour out of doors instead; compelling him to do so as hard as any other lad on the farm (Brontë 59). The sudden removal of Earnshaw's love, coupled with the removal of Catherine who briefly goes to live with the Lintons, is a scarring trauma from which Heathcliff never recovers. Heathcliff withdraws and develops a sense of inferiority and self-hatred as a result of his degradation. Another study[92] concluded that predictive factors of elevated risk for antisocial personality include children who live in poverty, have fathers with a history of drug and alcohol abuse or parents who rely on "power-assertive punishment," both of which increase the chances of a child developing an antisocial personality (Cohen et al.

[91] "The Intergenerational Transmission of Family Violence: The Neurobiology of the Relationships among Child Victimization, Parental Mental Health, and Addiction" shows that "childhood maltreatment as a form of violence that affects the development of the biological stress systems of the body and brain and leads to serious mental illness" (De Bellis 81).

[92] Patricia Cohen, et al., "Predictors, Correlates, and Consequences of Trajectories of Antisocial Personality Disorder Symptoms from Early Adolescence to Mid-30s"

119). Though Hindley is not Heathcliff's father, the power-assertive punishment, fueled by Hindley's alcoholism, that he uses to dominate Heathcliff certainly have a negative effect on Heathcliff's mental development. Research shows that empathy develops early in childhood and is influenced by the people with whom they live and interact the most (Cohen et al. 110). Because he is deprived of a nurturing, loving environment and dominated by a vindictive, abusive power figure, Heathcliff must harden himself in order to survive and separate himself from his emotions. However, cutting himself off from his own emotions also requires that he cut off his ability to empathize with others.

In addition to early childhood family separation, abuse, and maltreatment, Heathcliff also suffers another form of childhood trauma: racial discrimination. As a child, Heathcliff is singled out as different primarily because of his appearance as a racial 'Other.' When other characters talk to Heathcliff, they almost always emphasize his racial difference, which is also equated with dirtiness and moral degradation. One study[93] finds that childhood racial discrimination is a type of trauma with longlasting effects, including damage to mental health and self-esteem that lasts into adulthood (Dulin-Keita, et al. 665). The study also shows that racial 'Others,' and particularly immigrants, are more aware of the concept of race than majority-race children, and that awareness of 'Otherness' has a negative impact on their psychological development and their perception of themselves.[94] Furthermore, the study concludes that the effects of racial

[93] Dulin-Keita, et al., "The defining moment: children's conceptualization of race and experiences with racial discrimination"

[94] The study finds that children who immigrate to the United States become keenly aware of their marginalized status within their schools and communities; furthermore, "racial discrimination negatively affect[s] self-esteem across racial/ethnic groups," which leads to "negative health effects associated with racial discrimination" that continue to affect the "health status for adolescents and adults" (Dulin-Keita et al. 677).

discrimination increase when minority children are placed in communities with low minority populations.[95] Other researchers show[96] that racial discrimination not only affects adolescents' socioemotional well-being but also leads to a string of other negative behaviors, including risk-taking and delinquent behaviors. Essentially, racial discrimination is a form of trauma, especially in the stages of early childhood and adolescent development. As the only racial 'Other' in the community, Heathcliff is the target of all discriminatory actions. The Lintons view him with both disgust and pity and contemplate imprisoning or hanging him simply because of his racial 'Otherness.' Both Hindley and Joseph emphasize Heathcliff's racial difference when cursing at and demeaning him. Even his adoptive father who loves Heathcliff and treats him as the favorite describes Heathcliff's appearance "as dark almost as if it came from the devil" when he first introduces Heathcliff to the household (Brontë 51). Heathcliff becomes keenly aware of his status of 'Other,' aware that his 'Otherness' is directly tied to his dark skin, which is why he wishes to have "light hair and fair skin" (67). Heathcliff knows, long before Catherine says marrying him would degrade her, that his skin is a barrier to his own happiness. Heathcliff is best able to bear abuse when he has a shared 'Otherness' with Catherine, but once he is deprived of that, he has no way to anchor himself within a society that forever views him through a racial lens.

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[95] This particular study looked at Hispanic and non-Hispanic black children in Birmingham, AL. The Hispanic children suffered more discrimination; however, the non-Hispanic black children in the study lived in communities with higher populations of other non-Hispanic black children.

[96] Paul Connoly, Racism, Gender Identities and Young Children: Social Relations in a Multi-Ethnic, Inner-City Primary School; Gene H. Brody, et al., "Perceived discrimination and the adjustment of African American youths: a five-year longitudinal analysis with contextual moderation effects"; Aprile Brenner, "The Toll of Racial/Ethnic Discrimination on Adolescents' Adjustment"; Enrique W. Neblett, "Racism and Health: Challenges and Future Directions in Behavioral and Psychological Research"; Tawanda M. Greer and Abby Spalding, "The Role of Age in Understanding the Psychological Effects of Racism for African Americans"

In suffering three different types of childhood trauma—separation, abuse, and racism—Heathcliff is completely altered. As a result of years of psychological abuse and trauma, Heathcliff becomes an antisocial personality who is detached from his emotions, incapable of feeling empathy, and devoid of guilt or remorse for his own abusive actions. He becomes an abusive father and husband, thus perpetuating the same violence he suffered as a child. As an antisocial personality, he has complete disregard for others, which is essential to his survival. This behavior can be seen in his abuse of his wife, Isabella,[97] and in the way he abuses and manipulates the children left in his charge.[98] The only way that he can survive the childhood abuse and the trauma of losing Catherine is by taking on a new role: because he is an antisocial personality, he has the ability to put on the mask of the oppressor.

The Oppressed Becomes the Oppressor

When he returns to Wuthering Heights, Heathcliff enters in a drastically different way than he did in his first arrival at the Heights. Essentially, "he makes not one, but two mysterious appearances—and at opposite ends of the social scale" (Stevenson 68). In his initial introduction to the family, he is entirely at the mercy of Mr. Earnshaw's benevolence, a homeless orphan with no home and no name. When he returns after three years away, he has the air of a gentleman who has acquired both wealth and social status. Naturally, Nelly hardly recognizes him, and she is

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[97] Very soon after her marriage to Heathcliff, Isabella comes to see him as a monster. She confides in Nelly that Heathcliff is "a lying fiend! a monster, and not a human being!" because of the way he treats her (Brontë 143).

[98] Linton Heathcliff is a sickly child whom Heathcliff uses to gain control over Thrushcross Grange. He practically forces a marriage between his son Linton and Catherine's daughter Cathy Linton and manipulates his frail son into leaving all of his possessions to Heathcliff rather than to his wife (Brontë 253). Hareton, the son of Heathcliff's tormentor, is given the same treatment that Heathcliff is given as a child: he is "reduced to a state of complete dependence on his father's inveterate enemy; and lives in his own house as a servant, deprived of the advantage of wages" Brontë 171).

> amazed . . . to behold the transformation of Heathcliff. He had grown a tall, athletic, well-formed man… His upright carriage suggested the idea of his having been in the army. His countenance was much older in expression and decision of feature…; it looked intelligent, and retained no marks of former degradation. A half-civilized ferocity lurked yet in the depressed brows and eyes full of black fire, but it was subdued; and his manner was even dignified. (Brontë 99)

His dual nature that marks his first arrival—simultaneously from God and the devil, from heaven and hell—follows him in his return; he maintains the dark, mysterious features that defined him as a child, but they are less wild and uncontrolled. In a way, he is reborn as an inverted reflection of the orphaned child he once was. Just as Heathcliff's origins were indeterminate when he first arrives at the Heights as orphan, the source or cause of Heathcliff's transformation remains unknown. The new Heathcliff is consumed by a quest for revenge and poses a dangerous threat; therefore, through Heathcliff, Brontë "[explores] what would happen if the suppressed power of the 'savage' outsiders were unleashed" (Meyer 100). Heathcliff represents the very real threat feared by colonizers: he figures out how to overthrow his oppressors and claim power for himself.

In returning to the Heights with vengeance on his mind, Heathcliff is enacting the racial stereotype established by Lawrence: he is motivated by revenge, out for blood, ready to inflict torment on women and children. Malchow notes that his "threatening masculinity, vindictiveness and sadism are somehow linked to what we have seen to be one of the supposed characteristics of the non-European, a childlike vengefulness and cruelty combined with a strong need for affection" (Malchow 129). Through another lens,

however, he is trapped in the cycle of violence that he experiences as a child. As De Bellis' study shows,

> The chronic stress of childhood maltreatment is strongly implicated as the origin of the intergenerational cycle of violence through its effects on the brain's reward and default mode networks. These effects can lead to psychopathology and addiction in maltreating parents who were maltreated as children. (96)

Heathcliff perpetuates this cycle of violence with the next generation who are in his care. In supplanting Hindley as master of Wuthering Heights, he simultaneously defeats and mirrors the violence he suffered under Hindley's rule, projecting his own rage against Hindley onto Hindley's son, Hareton, and, in effect, becoming Hareton's oppressor in the same way that Hindley was Heathcliff's oppressor. Heathcliff's abuse of both Linton and Hareton, however, can also be seen as a projection of self-hatred. Linton Heathcliff possesses the worst qualities of his father, and as a hybrid, he fills "the racialist stereotypes and anxieties of the time . . . [a]s a mulatto . . . [who] exploits his weakness, paleness, the younger Catherine's good heart and better nature, and his position" (von Sneidern 185). Heathcliff uses Linton for his own nefarious purposes and never shows any fatherly love or affection. Hareton, though, is Heathcliff's true double and the one who arguably suffers the most at the hands of Heathcliff. Though Heathcliff's hatred toward Hareton can be viewed as revenge against Hareton's father Hindley, the fact that Hareton is so much like Heathcliff in aspect and position could suggest that self-hatred fuels Heathcliff's maltreatment of Hareton. Hareton, however, possesses only a figurative darkness, which is why is able to procure a happy ending and obtain restoration. Unlike Heathcliff, who can never wash away his darkness and who does not even bear his own

name, Hareton can reclaim his inheritance with ease: Hareton bears the ancient name and the social status that no amount of money can buy for Heathcliff.

In order to gain his place of power, Heathcliff takes on the role of colonizer and oppressor, but this is merely a part he plays, a costume or a mask that he wears. He never has the corresponding social status to match his bank account. He is, in the words of Khair, "a displaced person, a person who has usurped the house, but only by using the legal and social rules that, in the first place, left him (and Catherine) on the margins" (Khair 65). Stephen Vine notes that Heathcliff's "entire history in the novel is framed in terms of *taking the place of others*" (342). Mr. Earnshaw gives Heathcliff "the name of a son who died in childhood," and he quickly takes the place of Hindley as Mr. Earnshaw's favorite (Brontë 52). He eventually takes Hindley's place as master of Wuthering Heights and Edgar's place as master of Thrushcross Grange. However, Heathcliff does more than take the literal places of other characters; he also symbolically replaces other characters, "grotesquely repeating or exaggerating the characteristics of those he ousts" (Vine 342). Heathcliff gains power, but he never fully supplants the Earnshaws or the Lintons: "the 'foreignness' of the foreigner is never erased, and neither is he or she made central to this space in which he or she is, above all, 'foreign' or 'invisible'" (Khair 133). Upon his death, the colonial order is restored and all of the properties revert back to their original ancestral owners. Heathcliff's line ends with him, and "[t]he Heights and its environs will revert to Anglo-Saxon racial purity" (von Sneidern 186). Heathcliff never bears the name of power, even when he owns Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange: it is the name of Hareton Earnshaw that hangs over the door, and even his gravestone, which bears only the name of the dead son he replaces, "denotes his exile from the language of the

colonizing race, and reveals the effect of that exile in erasing his identity" (Meyer 112). The very real threat that Heathcliff poses to the empire, though, is no less terrifying despite Heathcliff's inability to fully infiltrate the British social order in future generations. If for only a moment, Heathcliff is the 'Other' within, the infiltrator who claims the subject position and wields its power to the detriment of Earnshaws and Lintons alike. Though Heathclif's reign of terror comes to an end, the threat that he poses, the fear that he conjures, lives on.

Heathcliff certainly embodies the revenge of the colonized, a powerful force primed to bring about the downfall of those who have wronged him. However, the powerful image of Heathcliff as an abusive figure, the image of him that we see in the beginning and end of the novel, can obscure the other image of Heathcliff: the abandoned boy who is abused throughout his childhood and becomes the abuser as a means of survival. If colonialism is a form of abuse, then one way to overcome that abuse is to be the colonizer, the abuser, and that is what Heathcliff does. Although many of Heathcliff's actions can be explained by him taking the position of the colonizer, not all of his actions can be explained that way. Heathcliff does not just go after those who have wronged him; he also abuses his wife, his child, and even Catherine's child, whom he sees as a reflection of the one person who is always on his side. There is a level of Heathcliff's actions that can only be viewed through the psychology of abused children: he is separated from his family at an early age, placed in an area where he is viewed as different, traumatized by an abusive brother's jealous rage, and rejected by the one person with whom he finds solace, companionship, and identity.

Children like Heathcliff face unimaginable psychological trauma as a result of racist attitudes and policies as well as political upheaval and unrest. Because of his unknown origins, the psychological issues evident in Heathcliff as an adult seem to result from the compounding of trauma in childhood, which include separation from his original parents as well as racial trauma that results from years of discrimination. In this way, Heathcliff has something in common with the children depicted in twenty-first-century videos and newspaper articles. Though not every child who suffers trauma becomes an antisocial personality, studies[99] on refugee and immigrant children suggest that the kind of separation Heathcliff suffers in his early childhood likely has some lasting psychological effects, which can include post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) as well as irreversible changes to their brain chemistry. Our television screens and newspapers are filled with images of these children from around the world, from refugees to asylum seekers to immigrants,[100] who are suffering. In the images of young children living in squalor, crying for the comfort of their mothers, grasping for survival, we might also see the young Heathcliff, the abused child separated from his family, a child with whom we can empathize and champion. The children who survive will, like Heathcliff, have lasting psychological issues to address. Heathcliff's childhood also provides some assurance that children can overcome trauma. In the arms of a loving father and an 'Other' with whom he can identify, Heathcliff thrives and shows that there

[99] Alexander Miller et al., "Understanding the mental health consequences of family separation for refugees: Implications for policy and practice"; Lisseth Rojas-Flores, et al., "Trauma and psychological distress in Latino citizen children following parental detention and deportation"

[100] Both asylum seekers and refugees are people displaced from their homes due to war, persecution, or political violence; however, asylum seekers have not yet had their refugee status confirmed. This places asylum seekers in a more precarious position than refugees. Immigrants, on the other hand, make a conscious decision to leave their home, as opposed to the forced migration of refugees and asylum seekers (McBrien).

is hope for the abused child. In his vengeance, though, Heathcliff also shows that when deprived of hope, an abused child might just find another way to survive, even if that means the destruction of others, a cautionary tale for those who would deprive children of the basic human necessities of security, family, and love.

CHAPTER V

The Monster, the Madwoman, and the Devil: A Legacy of Otherness

When *Frankenstein*, *Jane Eyre*, and *Wuthering Heights* were first published, the concept of race as we understand it today had only recently been codified. The Enlightenment-era efforts to catalogue and classify coupled with expanding opportunities for people to interact with other cultures through trade and colonization gave rise to race science, the attempts to scientifically define different groups of people around the world. Such figures as Linnaeus, Buffon, Blumenbach, and Lawrence[101] established a collective consciousness across nineteenth-century Europe regarding race. The concept of the dark-skinned racial 'Other' as monstrous and threatening permeates the literature of the nineteenth century through characters like Frankenstein's Creature in *Frankenstein*, Bertha Mason in *Jane Eyre*, and Heathcliff in *Wuthering Heights*. Through these dark 'Others,' Mary Shelley, Charlotte Brontë, and Emily Brontë address not only the issue of race but also other key social issues of the nineteenth century: scientific advancement, gender roles, social structures, and class disparity. Shelley and the Brontë sisters, perhaps because they are women, find a way to merge an array of Otherness into the image of captivating, dynamic characters as a means of social commentary. These characters endure partly because they maintain a sense of relevance that beckons writers and critics to return to them, to reevaluate them, and sometimes even reimagine them in new settings and contexts. Such is the case for Victor LaValle, Jean Rhys, and Maryse Condé, who are

[101] Carolus Linnaeus was a zoologist who set out the classify and define all plants, animals, and minerals, and though he did not discuss humans, his work is foundational for later race scientists; Comte de Buffon, like Linnaeus, attempted to classify and order all species in the three kingdoms, but his race studies included theories regarding the effect of climate on race; Johann Friedrich Blumenbach was the first to establish race classifications and eventually settles on five races; William Lawrence, an acolyte of Blumenbach, added moral characteristics to Blumenbach's five race classifications.

each compelled to return to these nineteenth century 'Others' and bring their Otherness from the margins of their original texts to the forefront of new creative works: LaValle's *Frankenstein* sequel, *Destroyer*; Rhys' *Jane Eyre* prequel, *Wide Sargasso Sea*; and Condé's *Wuthering Heights* remake, *Windward Heights*.

Victor LaValle's *Destroyer*

In *Destroyer*, a six-part comic miniseries, LaValle reinterprets the Frankenstein myth through the lens of the Black Lives Matter[102] movement. However, in the spirit of Shelley's efforts of using literature to provide social commentary, he melds criticisms of racism in the U.S. with discussions about gender inequality, climate change, and scientific advancement, all of which make *Destroyer* a tale that is culturally relevant for a twenty-first-century audience, situated within this particular moment in history. The comic medium, which is itself "a hybrid word-and-image form in which two narrative tracks, one verbal and one visual, register temporality spatially" (Chute 452), is a bit like a Frankenstein's monster, a blend of forms that, together, makes an entirely new creature. Such a format is fitting for a topic fraught with emotion because it allows us to have a truly contemplative experience as we "not only [fill] in the gaps between panels but also [work] with the often disjunctive back-and-forth of *reading* and *looking* for meaning" (Chute 452). In *Destroyer*, Dr. Josephine Baker,[103] the last living descendant of Victor Frankenstein, loses her teenage son Akai in a police shooting reminiscent of Trayvon

[102] The Black Lives Matter movement was born in the midst of a string of widely-publicized shootings of unarmed black men and boys (Snider).

[103] Whether the name Josephine Baker is coincidental or an intentional nod to the American-French entertainer who was also part of the French Resistance during World War II is unclear. The historical Baker, like Dr. Baker in the story, is a strong black woman who defies convention and crusades against racism and racial injustice. Because there are not really any other similarities, it is possible that this connection is mere coincidence.

Martin[104] and Tamir Rice,[105] although the name Akai references the murder of Akai Gurley,[106] a black man killed in New York. As a brilliant scientist, Dr. Baker channels her anger and grief into her research and uses her own scientific knowledge coupled with the journals of her ancestor, Victor Frankenstein, to bring her son back to life.

LaValle's *Destroyer* very quickly situates itself within the Frankenstein mythology. The first image in the *Destroyer* series is of Frankenstein's Creature sitting atop an enormous ice sheet in Antarctica (see Figure 5). Although the stylized art is dramatically different from the 1831 Frontispiece, the indication is unmistakable: this is the Creature, Frankenstein's monster, a massive, muscled figure wearing ripped pants and bearing the staples and sutures that hold together his various body parts. The Creature apparently did not die at the end of Shelley's novel, though his missing nose suggests that some parts of him have not fared well despite his supposed immortality. There are a few differences, however, in this updated view of the Creature. He does not have yellow skin or "watery eyes, that seemed almost of the same colour as the dun white sockets in which they were set" (Shelley 59-60). Instead, his skin is a dark gray color and his eyes are two different colors, one blue and one orange. Most notably, however, is that the Creature is now simply called *Monster*, which also signals a significant change in his character. In Shelley's novel, the Creature longs for human connection. Years of isolation have

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[104] On February 26, 2012, seventeen-year-old Trayvon Martin was walking home from a convenience store when he was confronted and killed by George Zimmerman (Botelho). Though Trayvon was not the first, and certainly not the last, black male to be killed simply because he appeared threatening, his death ignited a national conversation about the way young black males are viewed in the U.S., by private citizens as well as police officers.

[105] Twelve-year-old Tamir Rice was shot by a Cleveland police officer on November 22, 2014, as a result of "a 911 call reporting a person pointing a gun--which turned out to be a toy pistol missing its orange safety cap" (Ohlheiser).

[106] In an interview with *Entertainment Weekly*, LaValle notes that Tamir Rice's story was the primary inspiration for Akai, but he chose the name Akai for Akai Gruley, a black man killed in New York, because he felt "like his name and his story had been somewhat missed" (Breznican).

stripped him of his hope for humanity, though, and he has now truly become a monster with no compassion for humanity. Furthermore, two hundred years have not diminished the Monster's thirst for revenge; while receiving a world history update from a well-meaning environmentalist, the Monster inadvertently hears the name Frankenstein, which launches him on a new quest to kill and destroy. He carves out a path of destruction as he makes his way to Dr. Baker and her newly resurrected son for a climactic showdown in the final chapter.

Figure 5. Destroyer's depiction of Frankenstein's Creature.

The comic also subtly references film adaptations of the Frankenstein myth, most notably the 1935 film, *Bride of Frankenstein*. Dr. Josephine Baker, following the death of her son, develops two distinct gray strands of hair reminiscent of the titular Bride of Frankenstein. The gray curls reflect a drastic change in her character as a result of her son's death: a part of her has died, but in her efforts to resurrect him, she is transformed into a type of monster as well. The Bride of Frankenstein is also referenced in a more overt way through 'The Bride,' a mechanical beast that merges with its host. In Shelley's novel, Victor fears that a female monster might desire "the superior beauty of man" (144), which carries the dual threat of male rape and hybrid offspring. That threat is made real in LaValle's Bride: Pliers, Dr. Baker's husband and Akai's father, chooses to merge with the Bride in order to protect his wife and child. As a result, he becomes a hybrid machine with a human consciousness whose sole purpose is to dominate and destroy at the behest of the mysterious research organization that created him. Pliers is completely overtaken by The Bride, and this new creation is "ten times more malignant than her mate" (Shelley 144). Victor's fear of a female monster is, therefore, realized in LaValle's text.

There are also several other subtle nods to Mary Shelley and the long history of the Frankenstein myth. The electric currents that outline the speech balloons of the new 'monsters,' both The Bride and Akai before he is resurrected, hint toward Galvanism,[107] the use of electric currents to contract muscles. Though in both *Frankenstein* and *Destroyer*, Victor's secret science that allows for reanimation is never specifically

[107] Named after Luigi Galvani, who discovered animal electricity. Some thought that the muscle retractions generated by electrical currents in Galvani's work suggested that electricity could be used to reanimate the dead.

detailed, the references to Galvanism in Shelley's text have led many adapters of the myth to signify electricity[108] as the method of reanimation. Victor Frankenstein himself makes an appearance in the comic, though in an ironic twist, he is now the victim of scientific experimentation. Victor takes the form of a series of failed clones: the nefarious shadow organization responsible for the Monster's return are seeking to unlock the secret of immortality and need a version of Victor in order to control the Monster. Unfortunately, they continually fail to create a successful clone, so Victor clone after Victor clone melts into a puddle of human tissue. Finally, two scientists for the organization, who are named Percy Shelley and George Byron, provide a meta reference to Mary Shelley and her creation of *Frankenstein*. Percy Shelley and Lord Byron are key figures in Mary Shelley's life, particularly in their role in the writing contest for which Mary Shelley wrote her first draft of *Frankenstein*. Percy, Mary Shelley's husband, was particularly involved in the editing and publishing process, and his poetry even features in the text. The fact that Percy Shelley's and Lord Byron's namesake scientists are inept is a somewhat lighthearted mocking of the self-importance of the male Romantic poets.

The primary focus of the comic series, however, is the issue of racist violence against black males, which is shifted to the forefront of the narrative. The primary characters, Dr. Josephine Baker and her son Akai, are both African Americans who live in Chicago. Akai, while walking home from a baseball game at the iconic Thillens Stadium,[109] is shot and killed by police. Though we know from the beginning of the

[108] Not all agree that electricity is used to bring the monster to life. Ulf Houe counters this conventional belief: "there is no mention of electricity at the moment of creation . . . no lightning, no Galvanic fluid" (Houe 95).

[109] According to the Thillens website, the stadium first opened in 1938, and "[t]housands of Chicago's kids grew up at this historic replica of a full size major league baseball stadium" (Thillens). The Thillens baseball landmark is depicted several times in *Destroyer.*

series that Akai is killed in a police shooting, we learn through a flashback in Chapter Five of the specific events surrounding Akai's death: while he is walking home from his baseball game, bat slung over his shoulder, a woman looking through a window in her house sees him and calls the police. The dialogue reads like so many others, particularly the shooting of Tamir Rice, and in fact, LaValle notes that he "used transcripts from that [Rice] case to try to make [the scene] really land" (Breznican). The woman, like other well-meaning white[110] men and women, calls to report to the police that "there's a man with a rifle walking in front of my house" (chapter 5). The operator immediately asks the woman to determine race and age: she says he is black and estimates he is between eighteen and twenty. The scene, shown in Figure 6, reflects the problematic details surrounding so many shootings of black males. The comic depicts a woman surrounded by yellow light, safe in her house, and yet, the woman looks out onto the street and sees a shadowy figure that she immediately deems threatening to her despite her elevated, protected position. She is only capable of seeing the threat: despite the darkness, she can see well enough to determine race, which the dialogue suggests is the most important factor to both the police dispatch operator and the woman. Young boys like Trayvon Martin and Tamir Rice are described and treated as men; even though they are only boys, they are viewed as dangerous threats and confronted with excessive force. In the words of Claudia Rankine,[111] "because white men can't / police their imagination / black people are dying" (135). Akai is only twelve years old, the same age as Tamir Rice, when he is

[110] Though she is only shown in silhouette, one might assume based on other shootings that she is a white woman.

[111] Rankine's *Citizen: An American Lyric* has been described as a blend of criticism and poetry. In the book she confronts the various types of racism that black people face in the United States, including the pervasive stereotypes that lead to the deaths of unarmed black males.

Figure 6. Akai walks down the street carrying his baseball bat.

shot and killed because his bat is mistaken for a rifle.[112] Such extreme force is the result of race stereotyping[113] that depicts black males as violent, powerful, and threatening to the white community in general and white women specifically. At another point in the comic, Pliers/The Bride, juxtaposes sympathy for the monster with sympathy for black

[112] Tamir Rice was killed while playing with a toy gun.

[113]The black body has long been viewed as dangerous and threatening. Sandra Gunning notes that "[t]he Black Male Body, hypersexualized and criminalized, has always functioned as a crucial and heavily overdetermined metaphor" that drives white violence against black men as well as the mass incarceration of black men (Gunning 3).

children like his son who are victims of racial violence: “Look at the backflips people will do to find the humanity in that monster. But when they saw a boy like mine, they had no love to spare” (LaValle, chapter 5, Figure 7). The monstrosity of a black male, in this case, is viewed as more threatening and less human than the immortal monster. In this way, LaValle is carrying forward the question first asked by Shelley: What makes a monster? We get various forms of monsters throughout the series: Frankenstein’s original monster, now fully stripped of humanity; Akai who is transformed through science into a cyborg monster; and the grieving parents who each embrace different forms of monstrosity as a way of dealing with the racial violence that destroys their family. But is Akai a monster? Is Josephine? LaValle, however, is also challenging and subverting the

Figure 7. Sympathy for the monster versus a lack of sympathy for black males.

idea of racial monstrosity. Perhaps, he suggests, the real monster is the white person who calls the police on the black kid or the culture that allows such injustices to happen.

LaValle also challenges a singular view of the black community as victims of racial violence. In the conclusion of the series, when Akai returns to Chicago, the consciousness of his mother challenges him to bear witness to the complex history of Chicago in general, and black people in particular. She wants him to live in Chicago, the only home he has known, "to try and help" (LaValle, chapter 6), but also to give voice to the stories that are silenced. She guides him past the bust of Jean-Baptiste Point Du Sable, "the black man who founded Chicago," and Homan Square, which is "the secret detention facility used by the Chicago police," and asks Akai to consider "why [he isn't] taught such things in school" and "who benefits from [his] ignorance" (LaValle, chapter 6). In beckoning her son to take off the "blinders," Dr. Baker challenges the reader, too, to confront "the good and the bad in your country" because "you can't look away" (LaValle, chapter 6). There exists a certain hope in the image of Akai, walking down the streets of Chicago, wearing a hoodie,[114] returning to Thillens Stadium to reclaim his childhood. Josephine and the Monster both confront violence with revenge, the traditional response to a long history of racial violence. For Akai, however, humanity is still worth saving. He is, of course, altered by his death and resurrection: he is now a powerful hybrid being, even more powerful than Frankenstein's Monster, and his eyes have been opened to the harsh realities of the world. In the final image of the series,

[114] Following the death of Trayvon Martin, hoodies like the one he wore, which had often been associated with thuggish black men, were reappropriated by the black community. Trayvon Martin was viewed as suspicious and potentially dangerous by George Zimmerman, the man who killed him, because he was a black male wearing a hoodie. The black community stood in opposition to those in the media who "warned parents not to let their children wear hoodies" because "it sends a sinister signal"; instead, they made the hoodie the emblem of their movement in marches across the country (Weeks).

Figure 8. Akai reclaiming his childhood at the end of *Destroyer*.

though, he is also just a kid enjoying a baseball game. Perhaps the fact that he is now an indestructible cyborg allows Akai to retain this hope for humanity. He can no longer be killed by the racism in society, so perhaps he can, as the hybrid being, confront and even heal the racism in society. As a kid who will never grow old, Akai still believes in the goodness of humanity, much like the young monster in Shelley's *Frankenstein*. Because he will never grow up, he retains hope for and faith in humanity.

LaValle's *Destroyer* is not solely focused on the topic of violence against black males; he blends together a string of commentary on a variety of social issues dominating twenty-first-century news. Much in the same way that Mary Shelley infuses her novel with discussions of scientific exploration, gender roles, class disparity, and racial issues, LaValle's comic series addresses such wide-ranging issues as climate change,[115] cloning,[116] Civil War monuments,[117] the border crisis, and gender discrimination. Throughout the series, we periodically return to the Monster as he makes his way to the final confrontation with Victor's descendents. In one scene, he travels through Mexico where several would-be immigrants view him as a spiritual guide who will see them safely across the border. This version of the Monster, however, is not sensitive to the plight of humans and is no longer looking for human connection and acceptance: when

[115] At the beginning of the series, a research vessel is searching through antarctica, we later learn looking for the Monster. The polar caps are obviously melting: the Monster is sitting atop a block of ice that has broken off from the ice sheet. There is also a group of environmental activists protesting the damage to the environment caused by the research vessel. One of the first acts of violence committed by the Monster is in response to the slaughter of a whale and its calf.

[116] There are a series of Victor Frankenstein clones, all of which fail. Despite their scientific advancements, the nefarious research organization cannot figure out how to successfully clone a human (or a chicken), which is somewhat strange considering the fact that cloning of animals has been successful for more than twenty years.

[117] When Pliers says that Josephine acts like the Civil War never ended, she suggests that the whole country needs to be torn down. This brings up the question of how we should confront the history of racial violence: Do we preserve the history, warts and all, or do we burn the whole thing down?

they arrive at the border wall, the Monster smashes through the wall and the immigrants are buried in the rubble. This unthinking, unfeeling Monster is more in line with later adaptations of Frankenstein's monster, though his lack of humanity may be a result of more than two centuries of isolation in the arctic. He no longer has any compassion for humanity, no longer views humans as innocent; he now kills indiscriminately. Twice the Monster interacts with humans who are not afraid of him: on the environmentalists' ship at the beginning of the series and in this scene, but the part of the Monster that might have wanted such acceptance no longer exists. After smashing through the border, the

Figure 9. Frankenstein's monster at the southern US Border.

Monster is confronted by vigilantes patrolling the border. These men are clearly not part of the U.S. Border Patrol: they are not in uniform, and they are driving a red truck that is covered in messages that reference President Donald Trump and the right wing view of immigrants. One sticker reads, "Bean Count," a reference to a derogatory term for Mexicans used by white Americans in the southern United States, and the sticker is placed below the handwritten call-to-arms, "KILL EM ALL" (LaValle, chapter 2). Other slogans that reference President Trump include, "Proud Again," "Great Again,"[118] and "45."[119] In a somewhat dramatic change from Shelley's depiction of the Creature, these men do not view the Monster as 'Other.' Because the Monster is responsible for killing five Mexicans, they view him as an ally and offer to let him "serve on the right side of history" (LaValle, chapter 2). This scene subtly reflects an idea that has become mainstream in twenty-first-century United States politics: the monster on our side may be a monster, but at least he is serving our greater good. The concept behind this belief system is that a moral, upstanding person will not get his hands dirty, but a corrupt politician will. In this world, far removed from the race scientists of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, a monster is viewed more favorably than immigrants or black males simply because he is serving a nationalistic 'greater good.'

The comic explicitly criticizes these disparities, and that is especially true in the way that the comic addresses intersectionality. Dr. Josephine Baker is a black woman who is leading her scientific field. LaValle directly confronts and challenges stereotypes and injustices related to the intersection of Dr. Baker's race and gender. Through

[118] Donald Trump's 2016 campaign slogan was "Make America Great Again."
[119] President Trump is the 45th president of the United States.

flashback, we see a young Josephine's intelligence questioned by a white teacher: "I qualified for their gifted and talented programs and was told I was welcome," she recalls. "They were happy to have me until I scored better than all their girls and boys. I stopped counting how many tests they made me retake" (LaValle, chapter 6). She is determined to climb over every obstacle that is placed in front of her, and she does; Josephine becomes one of the top scientists in her field. However, the death of her son shifts the trajectory of her character arc. She shifts from representing a stinging commentary against racial discrimination in academia and the sciences to the stereotype of the angry black

Figure 10. Josephine confronting stereotypes in school.

woman.[120] From one perspective, LaValle is repeating the 'man becomes monster' trope from Shelley's novel. Like Victor before her, Dr. Baker allows her tunnel vision to cloud her judgment, and in the end, she is arguably the real 'Destroyer,' not her son Akai. However, she takes a supervillain turn as she takes over The Bride and beings plotting the destruction of the entire country: "This whole damn country is one big **Civil War monument.** It's time to **tear it down**" (LaValle, chapter 6). In this moment, she suggests that the system is so broken that it cannot be fixed; therefore, the greater approach to the long history of racial violence is, perhaps, that the whole system needs to be torn down in order for the violence to end, like burning a forest to allow for new growth. She is then almost immediately killed by the Monster, but not before she uploads her consciousness so that she can continue to guide her son. Though the 'angry black woman' imagery of Josephine in the moments before her death might seem to be dangerously leaning into racial stereotypes,[121] there is one line that reveals that the trope is employed to subvert gender expectations. When Pliers/The Bride questions her actions, she reminds him that if she were a man rather than a woman, her "quest for vengeance would be considered heroic" (LaValle, chapter 6). Depicting Josephine as an 'angry black woman,' therefore, creates a larger commentary about the gendered expectations of women, and particularly women of color. Josephine's grief is acceptable as long as her grief follows the expectations for grieving black mothers. Unlike white women, who are allowed to

[120] Jones and Norwood, in "Aggressive Encounters & White Fragility: Deconstructing the Trope of the Angry Black Woman," trace the way black women are rendered invisible, dehumanized, and then face "consequences of exercising voice," which results in being "transformed into the trope of the Angry Black Woman" (2021).

[121] Victor LaValle is the only male author of the six texts examined in this study. The illustrator of *Destroyer*, Dietrich Smith, is also male. The problematic stereotype of the 'angry black woman,' then, could be a result of the male perspective; however, LaValle's and Smith's efforts to show Dr. Baker's reactions as justified and situate them within the context of male heroism suggest that they employ the stereotype for the sake of a larger criticism.

Figure 11. Dr. Baker, the Angry Black Woman. *Dr. Josephine Baker, bearing the appearance of a supervillain, evokes the Civil War Monument debate as she ponders the destruction of a culture that has cost her son his life.*

express anger and a desire for eye-for-and-eye vengeance, the grieving black woman is expected to suppress her anger, to be a peacemaker, to make a public plea to end the violence, to give comfort to whites who might be anxious about a community of color seeking revenge (Lawson). In embracing revenge, Josephine is refusing to play the role defined by white society.

Taken together, the various depictions of 'Others' throughout the comic series couches a larger conversation about 'Othering' within the Black Lives Matter narrative.

Throughout the comic, we see the 'Othering' of the environment, of immigrants, of women, and of black males in a way that is much more explicit than in Mary Shelley's original text. Because LaValle shifts the 'Other' into the subject position, he is able to confront pervasive stereotypes in order to create an argument about racism in the twenty-first-century United States.

Jean Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea*

Rhys shifts racial 'Otherness' into the forefront of her novel as well by setting her novel in the post-Emancipation Caribbean. In *Jane Eyre*, Bertha Mason is, described only as "the daughter of Jonas Mason, a merchant, and of Antoinetta his wife, a Creole" (Brontë 260), but in *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Bertha claims center stage, which allows for a more thorough exploration of her 'Otherness.' The term *creole* by itself is ambiguous and could describe people who are white, black, or of mixed race. This necessitates additional descriptors like *French* or *Negro*, which are needed in order to determine race with more specificity. According to Sue Thomas, there were four possible definitions in use in nineteenth-century Britain: "white people of Spanish descent naturalized by birth in Spanish America; people of non-aboriginal descent naturalized by birth in the West Indies; non-aboriginal people 'of different colours' (white or 'negro') born in Spanish America . . . ; and white people of European descent naturalized by birth in the West Indies" (Thomas 2). Some critics[122] have concluded that Bertha Mason is a white Creole

[122] Spivak, for example, assumes that Bertha is a "white Jamaican creole" who possesses animalistic qualities that make her subhuman and, therefore, less sympathetic as the legal wife of Jane's love interest (247). Likewise, Patricia McKee, argues that Bertha's darkness is more metaphorical than literal, that the darkness is more related to her insanity than her race. There is certainly some credence to the argument that Brontë uses darkness of complexion metaphorically (70).

and any associations of darkness are purely metaphorical; others,[123] though, have argued that Bertha's ambiguous origins open up at least the possibility of literal racial 'Otherness.' In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Rhys removes this ambiguity: her 'Bertha,' originally called Antoinette before Rochester[124] renames her, is explicitly described as a white Creole.

Antoinette, however, still functions as a racialized 'Other,' despite the clarification, though in some ways, her 'Otherness' is even compounded in Rhys' prequel. Antoinette identifies with both the black and white communities, but she does not fit into either community; as Spivak observes, she is "caught between the English imperialist and the black native" (Spivak 250). As a white Creole, she is hated by the recently-emancipated black Creoles who call her a "white cockroach" (Rhys 13) because she comes from a family of former slave owners. However, because she is Creole, she is also explicitly a non-English 'Other.' The fact that her mother is a *French* Creole only further emphasizes her non-Englishness. White Creoles, despite their ancestral origins, are considered a separate, explicitly non-European race, a belief that is rooted in the racial discourse of the eighteenth- and nineteenth- centuries. Scientists like Blumenbach endorse the belief that climate changes race. In the footnotes of his 1775 edition of *On the Nature of Mankind*, Blumenbach cites Hawksworth's *Collection of Voyages* to support his claims about the racial difference of white Creoles:

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[123] Susan Meyer considers that Bertha's darkness may be more than metaphorical because of her ambiguous origins. She sees this Otherness, however, as a way to depict a shared oppression of black people and women (251). In an earlier chapter of this study, I argue that Bertha's depiction in *Jane Eyre* is explicitly non-white and non-European.

[124] Rochester is never directly named in *Wide Sargasso Sea*. In using the name Rochester here, I am following the critical tradition of using the character's name from *Jane Eyre*. In a way, by taking away Rochester's name, Rhys is reclaiming Antoinette/Bertha's power. Rochester strips Antoinette of her name in an effort to make her into an English ideal; in turn, Rhys denies Rochester's name in the narrative.

> If two natives of England marry in their own country, and afterwards remove to our settlements in the West Indies, the children that are conceived and born there will have the complexion and cast of countenance that distinguishes the Creole; if they return, the children conceived and born afterwards, will have no such characteristics. (Hawkesworth 778)

By this standard, climate is the main factor in determining whether a person is Creole or European. Rhys' Antoinette, like Brontë's Bertha, is identified as a non-European 'Other' who stands in direct opposition to the purity of Englishness.

Antoinette is further 'Othered' as a woman. In *The History of the Island of Dominica*, Thomas Atwood, chief justice of the island of Dominica in the eighteenth century, explains that warmer climates also affect temperament, especially for women. Atwood explains that "women in particular, in warm climates, are given to inordinate desires"; furthermore, "a too warm constitution, which, aided by luxury, too often gives itself up to satisfying its own depraved appetites, against every sense of decency, and consideration of duty" (Atwood 213). Just after Rochester and Antoinette consummate their marriage, a letter arrives for Rochester from Daniel Cosway, who claims to be[125] the illegitimate son of Antoinette's father. In the letter, Daniel reflects Atwood's beliefs about Creole women when he warns Rochester that "soon the madness that is in her, and in all these white Creoles, come out" (Rhys 57). Such beliefs about the inclination and nature of women affect the way men like Mr. Mason and Rochester treat their respective wives. They view themselves as superior to these racialized, sexualized 'Others,' and even anticipate their wives' descent into madness. At the first hint of "depraved

[125] Antoinette claims that his name is really Daniel Boyd, a man who "hates all white people, but hates [Antoinette] the most" (Rhys 77).

appetites" or "inordinate desires," both Annette and Antoinette are cast aside, locked away, quickly forgotten and replaced.

The problematic mother/daughter inheritance of madness and sexuality, which is referenced in *Jane Eyre*, is brought to the foreground in *Wide Sargasso Sea* through a series of characters and events that foreshadow Bertha's eventual downfall. Annette foreshadows what is to come for her daughter, just as Mr. Mason foreshadows Rochester. Both men briefly enjoy what their beautiful wives have to offer only to quickly sour on them when they lack the temperament of the English ideal, 'Angel in the House.'[126] Both women are declared insane by their husbands and subsequently confined. Even the burning of Coulibri foreshadows the burning of Thornfield Hall. Just as they are in *Jane Eyre*, the fates of mother and daughter are inextricably linked and intertwined. In *Jane Eyre*, Rochester claims that Bertha has inherited insanity from her mother:

> Bertha Mason is mad; and she came of a mad family; idiots and maniacs through three generations! Her mother, the Creole, was both a madwoman and a drunkard!—as I found out after I had wed the daughter: for they were silent on family secrets before. Bertha, like a dutiful child, copied her parent in both points. (Brontë 262)

This is the only account given of Bertha Mason's condition in Brontë's novel, but Rochester is certainly motivated to present his wife as the wrongdoer to detract from his own dishonesty and attempted bigamy. Likewise, Rochester narrates the second part of *Wide Sargasso Sea* so that we once again have Antoinette/Bertha's madness filtered

[126] In *Victorian People and Ideas*, Altick describes the ideal woman in the Victorian world "as a priestess dedicated to preserving the home" who was expected "to cultivate fragility, leaning always on the arm of the gentleman who walked with her in a country lane or escorted her to dinner" (Altick 53).

through Rochester. What is revealed, though, through the extended view of their relationship is the way Rochester psychologically abuses Antoinette, starting with renaming her Bertha, which essentially strips her of her identity, "thus domesticating her in terms of class as well as of sex and race" (Mardorossian, "Double [De]colonization" 81). By his own admission, Rochester never loves Antoinette; he says he was only "thirsty for her, but that is not love" (Rhys 55). She is merely a sexualized 'Other' that exists for his own enjoyment. Furthermore, he is only too eager to accept the slander from Daniel Cosway as fact. He reflects, after finishing the letter, that he "felt no surprise. It was as if [he'd] expected it, been waiting for it" (Rhys 59).

Rochester views himself as superior to Antoinette, and he even equates her with Amélie, a mixed race servant. When Antoinette "raise[s] her eyebrows and the corners of her mouth [turn] down in a questioning, mocking way," Rochester registers her actions as non-English, antithetical to the 'Angel of the House' behaviors he expects from English women, which immediately makes Rochester think "she look[s] very much like Amélie" (Rhys 76-77). In this way, Rochester links brazen behavior in women to racial 'Otherness.' He views both women as beneath him, objects for sexual enjoyment, but not equals in class or race. He even wonders if "they are related," which he believes is "possible, it's even probable in this damned place" (Rhys 76-77). After having revenge sex[127] with Amélie as retaliation for Antoinette's betrayal of his trust, he notes that Amélie's "skin was darker, her lips thicker than he had thought" (Rhys 84), which further reveals his racist attitudes toward both Amélie and, by extension, Antoinette. Antoinette's

[127] Rochester is furious when he realizes that Antoinette uses obeah, a practice similar to voodoo, on him. He notes that Antoinette "need not have done what she did to me. I will always swear that, she need not have done it" (Rhys 82). In retaliation for this betrayal of trust, Rochester has sex with Amélie while Antoinette listens in the next room.

racial ‘Otherness’ and her female ‘Otherness’ are linked in this comparison to Amélie: both women are racialized and objectified by Rochester, who sees them as interchangeable. For Antoinette, though, Rochester’s infidelity is a turning point: she briefly leaves, and when she returns, she has the appearance of a madwoman. She shrieks, she bites, she laughs “[a] crazy laugh” (Rhys 89), and her physical appearance is dramatically altered. Antoinette is beginning to look like the Bertha Mason of *Jane Eyre*: “Her hair uncombed and dull into her eyes which were inflamed and staring, her face was very flushed and looked swollen. Her feet were bare” (Rhys 87). This view of Antoinette/Bertha reveals that Rochester plays a much more significant role in her mental deterioration. This is not an inheritance from the mother but, rather, a result of colonial abuse toward a colonized ‘Other.’ Rochester sexually objectifies Antoinette, strips her of her identity by renaming her, and then betrays her with another woman.

Rochester’s cruelty toward and distrust of Antoinette is rooted in his feelings about Jamaica in general. Rochester describes Jamaica as “[n]ot only wild but menacing” (Rhys 41). He longs to return to his beloved England, to be free from the wild, untamed nature of Jamaica, the strange customs and practices, and an uncontrollable wife. In a way, Rochester is England, cold and distant; he is aloof and denies Antoinette any true intimacy beyond his “savage . . . desire” for her (55). Antoinette, conversely, is the exotic, wild Jamaica that cannot be tamed. Even early in their marriage, Rochester notes that Antoinette is “obstinate” (56), and he does not like the way she mocks him and challenges him (76). When she dares to use Christonphine’s obeah on him (81), he becomes determined to break her will. This view of Rochester, the vindictive husband who delights in the idea of breaking his wife’s spirit (99) and begins daydreaming of

holding his wife hostage in an English country house (98), exonerates, to some extent, the Bertha Mason of *Jane Eyre*. Though she clearly teeters on the edge of sanity, her madness is not indicative of an inherited mental defect. Antoinette also retains her humanity throughout *Wide Sargasso Sea*, even in her fiery suicide. She never becomes an unthinking, unfeeling, animalistic monster. However, in Rhys' efforts to bring Bertha out of the attic and give the white Creole her own voice and agency, she deprives the black Creole of the same opportunity. The racial 'Others' are pushed to the margins of the text: Christophine, the black caregiver; Tia, the black childhood friend; and Amélie, the mixed-race servant.

Christophine is commodified from the moment she is introduced in the novel: Annette tells Antoinette that Christophine was given to her by her first husband as a wedding present (Rhys 12), and she eventually becomes a type of surrogate mother to Antoinette, essentially a mammy figure.[128] Spivak notes that Christophine is "tangential to this narrative," partly because "[s]he cannot be contained by a novel which rewrites a canonical English text within the European novelistic tradition in the interest of the white Creole rather than the native" (Spivak 253). As such, the colonized 'Other' in an imperialist text can only be viewed through an imperialist lens. The same is true of Tia, a black servant and Antoinette's childhood friend, who is depicted as a reflection of Antoinette: "We had eaten the same food, slept side by side, bathed in the same river" (Rhys 27). Subconsciously, Antoinette expresses a desire not just to be *like* Tia but to *be* her, to be black. Though Antoinette moves between white and black cultures, she feels a

[128] K. Sue Jewell describes the Mammy figure as "a trusted adviser and confidante who skills were exclusively in service of the white families to which she was attached. . . She represented a maternal ideal, but not in caring for her own children. Her love, doting, advice, correction, and supervision were reserved exclusively for whites" (Jewell 38).

closer kinship with the black community in her youth. Antoinette's final moments at Coulibri, therefore, can be viewed as a fracturing of the Self. In leaving Coulibri and aligning with the white imperialist, Antoinette is rejecting Tia, and Tia lashes out by literally and figuratively wounding Antoinette (Rhys 27). Kubitschek observes that Antoinette rejects her alliance with the black 'Others,' which is essentially a rejection of self, because she cannot "enter Rochester's society with a black mother and friend"; instead, she comes to "[define] both Tia and Christophine as inferior . . . not realizing that the system will also define her as subhuman" (Kubitschek 24). However, Tia functions only in that purpose, not as her own person but as a reflection of a divided white Creole self. Similarly, Amélie mirrors Antoinette in the second part of the novel as she both reflects Antoinette's 'Otherness' and replaces her in Rochester's bed. Rochester comments that they look similar, which reveals how he views himself as superior to both of them, whom he views as mere sexual objects. Tia and Amélie both exist to highlight or contrast various aspects of Antoinette as a character. In this way, Antoinette is quite similar to Jane Eyre. They each rely on contrasts from racial 'Others' to highlight their own feminist heroism: Tia and Amélie are 'dark doubles' to Antoinette just as Bertha is 'dark double' to Jane. Because *Wide Sargasso Sea* privileges Antoinette, the white Creole, the broader context of British colonialism is pushed to the margins.

In the novel, Rhys rescues the madwoman from the attic and gives her the voice she is denied in *Jane Eyre*. Though Rhys cannot save Antoinette from her eventual fate, she rescues her, the marginalized 'Other,' from the shadows of *Jane Eyre*. Reimagining the Bertha Mason figure allows for a reexamination of the role of race, gender, and class. The intersection of race, gender, and class, which is subtly explored in *Jane Eyre*,

becomes a focal point of *Wide Sargasso Sea*, a move reflective of the changing social and political views in the more than one hundred years that pass between the publication of the two texts. Though new 'Others' are marginalized in the efforts to bring Antoinette/Bertha's 'Others' to the foreground, the novel still serves its primary purpose of giving voice to the voiceless, of restoring power to the powerless.

Maryse Condé's *Windward Heights*

Similarly, Maryse Condé's reimagining of *Wuthering Heights*, titled *Windward Heights*, is reflective of changing views toward race and colonialism in a postcolonial world. However, where *Wide Sargasso Sea* attempts to provide a counter to the story of Bertha/Antoinette, in *Windward Heights*, "Condé transposes *Wuthering Heights* into a Caribbean universe, adapts it to it and transforms it as if it were a musical variation on a previous theme" (Fumagalli 196). Many of the characters are renamed to fit the new setting of the French colony, Guadeloupe:[129] the Earnshaws become the Gagneurs; the Lintons become the Linsseuils; Heathcliff become Razyé; Hindley Earnshaw becomes Justin Gagneur; Edgar Linton becomes Aymeric de Linsseuil; Isabella Linton becomes Irmine de Linsseuil. Thrushcross Grange is transformed into Belles-Feuilles, a massive plantation that is home to the white Creole Linsseuil family, while Wuthering Heights is transformed into l'Engoulvent, an overseer's house "situated on the Windward Heights" of the island, home to the mulatto Gagneur family (Condé 19). This update allows for a more nuanced discussion of the class divide between the two families, with the mulatto Gagneurs situated below the white Linsseuils in the social hierarchy by both race and

[129] Condé makes a concerted effort to remove England from Brontë's novel. By setting her reimagining of the novel in a French colony, she successfully removes all traces of Englishness, which allows for a broader discussion of race.

class rank. The class divide exists in *Wuthering Heights* between the landed farming class (Earnshaws) and the landed gentry (Lintons), but not to the same degree that is allowed by introducing race as a way to further complicate the divide. As a result, Condé's text scrubbs all traces of Englishness and the English social order from the novel. The privileged class in Condé's novel are white Creoles, not the English, and they are under attack not just by a singular racial 'Other' on a quest for revenge but by an entire political group of freed slaves who view the former slave owners with disdain.

Condé also deviates dramatically from the *Wuthering Heights* form and narrative, especially in the second half of the novel. *Wuthering Heights* is the embodiment of symmetry: the first half of the novel tells the tale of one generation of two families that are interconnected, while the second half of the novel repeats and reflects in the second generation all of the conflicts of the first generation. Second-generation characters are reflections of their first-generation counterparts, and there are no extraneous characters to detract from the intergenerational narrative, no additional siblings or offspring to complicate the focus of the action. In *Windward Heights*, Condé discards the sparse family landscape in favor of more realistic, sprawling family trees filled with additional siblings and children that do not serve the central plot. The narrative structure is also dramatically different from Brontë's carefully crafted, Russian Doll-esque story-within-a-story-within-a-story frame. Instead, the novel begins in the middle of Razyé's self-imposed exile, a period of Heathcliff's history that remains unknown. Furthermore, rather than being told through the voice of Nelly Dean, the story is told primarily through a series of narrators, mostly marginal characters who witness the action of the novel, though occasionally the narration passes through an omniscient third-person narrator for

the sake of reflection or plot development before the narration baton is passed to another character. The closed loop of *Wuthering Heights*, both the familial and the narrative, reflects a "preoccupation [that is] symptomatic of an England attempting to protect its 'purity'"; Condé's version, however, "could be seen as trying to undo such a closed system" by "allowing oppressed voices to surface, tell their own histories" (Swamy 68). In the second half of the novel, Condé deviates greatly from Brontë's original text, particularly by allowing the Catherine and Heathcliff figures to have a child together and by introducing a third generation. For Brontë, the disruption of Englishness begins and ends with Heathcliff; he has no offspring survive to taint the future generations. For Condé, the third generation, Anthuria, not only ensures Razyé's genetic survival but also doubles it through an incestuous union of two Razyé offspring.[130] In being *inspired by* rather than *beholden to* the original story, Condé allows herself the freedom to explore the intersection of race, class, and gender separate from the English cultural contexts that dominate the original text, a feat that Jean Rhys does not quite achieve in her prequel.

The primary focus here will be on the first generation, which provides the most direct comparison between Brontë's and Condé's versions of the characters. Of the three nineteenth-century novels in this study, *Wuthering Heights* is most overt in its approach to the 'Other.' Heathcliff, the racial 'Other,' and Catherine, the female 'Other,' are central to the original text, and class disparity between the Earnshaws and Lintons also features, although more subtly. In *Windward Heights*, all forms of 'Otherness' are heightened and pushed to the foreground. Razyé, the Heathcliff figure, still has mysterious origins, but his race is less ambiguous: when he is introduced to the Gagneur

[130] The novel strongly hints that Cathy II is the lovechild of Razyé and Cathy. Rayzé II, who is Razyé oldest son with Irmine de Linsseuil, marries Cathy II, apparently his half-sibling.

family, he is immediately identified "a little black boy or Indian half-caste" with "skin [that] was black" (Condé 23). However, in addition to establishing race, Nelly[131] also immediately sexualizes him. She describes him as "a dirty, repulsive, seven- or eight-year-old boy, completely naked, with a well-developed sex, believe me" (Condé 22-23). By zeroing in on Razyé's sexuality, Nelly taps into the primary threat of the black body, which is "the dangerously pervasive stereotype of the black rapist—the black as beast" (Gunning 5). Black boys are also often prematurely viewed as men,[132] and in this instance, a boy that is no older than eight years old already possesses the dangerous sexuality of a full-grown black man. Nelly's racism also plays more prominently in Condé's text than it does in *Wuthering Heights*. She is disgusted by how "such a lovely girl" could possibly "bear to be embraced" by Razyé: "For a monster to be happy, doesn't he need to meet his match?" she wonders (Condé 30). Though Cathy is not a white woman, nor does she pass for white like her brother, Nelly views Razyé as a "repulsive animal" (30). Though Razyé is degraded by Justin Gagneur in much the same way as Heathcliff is degraded by Hindley, the Nelly of *Wuthering Heights* never views a Catherine-Heathcliff union as disgusting in the way that the Nelly of *Windward Heights* does. Heathcliff is a sympathetic figure as a child, and although Nelly and the majority of the family are disgusted with him when he first arrives at Wuthering Heights, he is not considered a monster until he returns and begins abusing women and children. However,

[131] This version of Nelly does not feature prominently in the novel. She has a few chapters of narration, but she is replaced by another servant when Cathy marries Aymeric and is entirely absent from the novel following her replacement. This is a dramatic change from the Nelly of *Wuthering Heights*, who is essential to *Wuthering Heights* as the primary narrator of Brontë's story.

[132] See the previous discussion of Trayvon Martin and Tamir Rice.

the image of the black Razyé embracing Cathy, a "delicacy" that he cannot appreciate (30) is enough to make Razyé monstrous in the eyes of Nelly.[133]

Just as Razyé's race is foregrounded in Condé's novel, so too is Cathy's. In a significant change from the Brontë text, Cathy shares in Razyé racial 'Otherness,' at least partially. In *Wuthering Heights*, Catherine shares in Heathcliff's 'Otherness' only as a wild, uncontrollable female who rejects the conventional behaviors of women. Any darkness that the young Catherine possesses is merely metaphorical, evidence of a restless spirit and the lack of a civilizing influence. In *Windward Heights*, however, the shared 'Otherness' becomes literal. Cathy is a dark-skinned mulatto, unlike her brother Justin who can pass as white; she is "the color of hot syrup left to cool in the open air, with black hair like threads of night and green eyes: (Condé 20). The suggestion is that she received a heavier genetic dose from the black side of her mulatto family, and that blackness is responsible for her primitive, savage tendencies. This is also what draws her to Razyé. Their shared darkness, literal now rather than figurative, bonds them on a visceral level. However, her darkness also makes her transition into the world of the Linsseuils even more dramatic:

> The wild girl who laughed at the top of her voice, spoke too loudly, massacred the French language, wiggled her *bonda* and danced the *gwo-ka* every evening in the yard, was dead and buried. A respectable young girl had taken her place. She pouted in just the right way. She didn't walk, she glided, her feet now firmly

[133] In both *Wuthering Heights* and *Windward Heights*, the Nelly character has moments when she views Heathcliff/Razyé sympathetically. There are parallel passages in both texts in which Heathcliff/Razyé long for whiteness so that he can be good enough for Catherine/Cathy, and both versions of Nelly comforts Heathcliff/Razyé by suggesting that he should clean himself up, be nicer, and imagine himself to be of royal ancestry.

> encased in shoes. She had pinned up and rolled into a chignon her thick black hair that used to tumble down her back. She worried about her complexion, shaded herself under a parasol and hid from the sun" (Condé 38).

Cathy's self-denial is heightened because she is not just denying her desires as a female but also suppressing the black side of herself. This is not just a surface level change but the death of a part of herself, the part of Cathy that is vibrant and free. The Cathy that is left is a vapid shell, what the white man wants her to be, stuffed into the suffocating mold of a respectable white woman.

As in Brontë's original novel, Condé still depicts Cathy as expressing a self/Other relationship with Razyé,[134] her own "I am Heathcliff" sentiments that express Oneness between the two characters and set up a splitting of the self when Cathy chooses Aymeric. However, Condé also introduces a new dimension of self division in Cathy that goes beyond her relationship with Razyé: the division between black and white. In *Wuthering Heights*, Catherine analyzes the difference between herself and Edgar as well as the similarity between herself and Heathcliff: she is as different from Edgar "as a moonbeam from lightning, or frost from fire," but "[w]hatever our souls are made of, [Heathcliff's] and [hers] are the same" (Brontë 86). For the Catherine of *Wuthering Heights*, the fracturing of self is all about suppressing her female desires and denying the

[134] Cathy says that she cherishes Razyé "more . . . more..than myself" (Condé 33), and when Cathy dies, Razyé wonders how he could "live without his soul" (Condé 107). Nelly also explains that "Cathy had been a papa, maman and a sister to him. Her body had protected him. When he curled up against her he found the softness of the breast and the womb he had never known" (Condé 42). Cathy and Razyé also have a physical bond that is explicitly sexual. Nelly often finds them asleep with "their bodies tangled up in the sheets" (Condé 25), and the omniscient narrator later details their shared sexual awakening.

most essential part of herself, the part that is a shared self with Heathcliff. In *Windward Heights*, though, Cathy's divided self is more explicit:

> It's as if there were two Cathys inside me and there always have been, ever since I was little. One Cathy who's come straight from Africa, vices and all. The other Cathy who is the very image of her white ancestor, pure, dutiful, fond of order and moderation. But this second Cathy is seldom heard, and the first always gets the upper hand. (Condé 44)

Cathy feels a division within her hybridity, two parts that never fully fit together. To choose one is to deny the other. The part she chooses to deny, though, is her most essential self, which is why her illnesses can only be treated by black medicine, "the science and power of our gods from Africa" (Condé 82). She also feels a separation from her first two children because they are too white and, therefore, "foreign to her" (Condé 64). Fumagalli explains that Cathy's hybridity "fails to act as a 'bridge' between the two main colours of the island" because she "is induced to believe that she has to choose which side of the non-existent bridge between the two corresponding cultures ('Africa' and 'Europe'/ 'Savagery' and 'Civilisation') she wants to belong to" (Fumagalli 203-04). In choosing to marry Aymeric and take on the name of de Linsseuil, she must find a way to contain her blackness, "a process of acculturation (absorption of béké culture) which, despite the fact that her husband Aymeric . . . 'adores' her, is never completed by interculturation but rather by her deculturation as her own culture is marginalized and suppressed" (Fumagalli 204). This is most evident in her death. When Cathy dies, her blackness can no longer be covered up, not by her wedding dress or any expressions of white religion: "It was as if her black blood could no longer be contained and was taking

its revenge," the omniscient narrator explains (Condé 91). After years of denying herself, Cathy is restored in death. Similar to Brontë's Catherine, Condé's Cathy cannot continue to live as a divided self.

Razyé, however, survives Cathy's denial and his own grief following her passing, in part because his blackness cannot be denied. He may be separated from his soul, but he never experiences the fractured self that the hybrid Cathy does. There is power in Razyé's blackness, a dangerous, threatening power that is the source of his strength and also the reason why men like Aymeric fear him. Razyé's blackness and dangerous sexuality are a focal point throughout the novel. When Razyé returns following his three-year absence, he poses an immediate threat to Aymeric, and his appearance as an imposing black man heightens Aymeric's horror:

> Cathy entered, beside herself with laughter, arm in arm with an athletic, well-formed man of towering height and upright carriage. His tight curly hair fell over his forehead; his eyes were full of black fire, his cheeks shaven and his skin so black that the cloth of his coat seemed light by comparison. Aymeric had never seen Razyé with his own eyes and from what he had heard, he'd taken him for a common scoundrel. He was stunned by his dignified manner and at a loss for words when Cathy crushed [Razyé's] hand into his. (Condé 59-60)

Razyé's blackness is the primary focus of his physical description, and his massive black body is terrifying to Aymeric. With his threatening stature, Razyé embodies "the figure of blackness as the epitome of animalism and sexual energy" (Gunning 5). Razyé subverts Aymeric's expectations, though, because he is not "a common scoundrel" but actually "dignified." In fact, he later notes that "[i]f it weren't for his color, his face

would let him into any respectable salon," which surprises Aymeric's mother because she thought "he looked like Satan in person" when she saw Razyé as a child (Condé 62). Despite his attractiveness and his reinvention as a wealthy, dignified man, Razyé's blackness and his overt sexuality remain his most prominent features throughout the novel.

Aymeric de Linsseuil provides a stark, white, emasculated contrast to Razyé's blackness and sexuality, a contrast made explicit in "Lucinda Lucius's Tale":

> How can I describe the contrast between the two men? Never had I noticed how the master's nickname suited him so well. He looked like a choirboy who serves at high mass on Sundays, or else a lamb that sucks his maman's teat, or a red-eyed, twitchy-nosed rabbit in its hutch. As for Rayzé, he was a volcano, a hurricane, an earthquake, a nigger stud with his iron spike pointing between his legs. (Condé 79).

Both Nelly's initial description of Razyé as a child and Lucinda's image of Razyé's "iron spike" play on stereotypes regarding black men, including hypersexuality and the threat they pose to the purity of white women. From the time that Aymeric sets out to marry Cathy, people begin whispering that "he was eating Razyé's leftovers" (Condé 51). Aymeric seems to be completely unaware of the gossip surrounding Cathy and Razyé's sexual relationship, but Razyé's return places that threat directly in front of him.

Aymeric likes to think of himself as possessing a cosmopolitan view of race. During his education in Europe, he develops a sense of equality and wishes to transform "the Belles-Feuilles estate into a model plantation where there would be no white Creoles, no mulattos, no blacks, but free men, equal in the eyes of the law" (Condé 41).

However, when he feels threatened by Razyé's infiltration in his family, through both his wife's and his sister's affections, his idealism is challenged. He has the kind of *I'm-not-trying-to-be-racist-but . . .* response typical of a white person criticizing a black person. His abstract principles, though, do not match up with his behavior in reality. He says that his criticism has nothing to do with race because "The Lord knows that in my eyes a negro is no different from a white or a mulatto," but this particular black person is "an individual without a name, without an education and without any virtue whatsoever" (Condé 70-71). Aymeric is threatened by Razyé's stature, masculinity, and sexuality, all of which are associated with Razyé's blackness as well as areas of deficiency for Aymeric. However, he couches his racist disgust in a classist argument against Razyé because he views himself as a well-educated cosmopolitan trying to establish a post-racial world. Despite championing a new world order on his plantation where all men work together in racial harmony, Aymeric cannot bear the black invasion in his own home. He can go against the wishes of his white Creole family to marry a mulatto woman, and he can embrace mulatto and black workers as equals on his plantation, but his cosmopolitanism has limits.

Razyé, like Heathcliff before him, disrupts the order of two separate families, and his quest for revenge impacts two generations. In *Wuthering Heights*, however, Heathcliff's death restores order. The imperial powers regain control of Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange. Heathcliff has no progeny to continue his legacy by complicating the gene pool. His line ends when he rejoins Catherine in death. Rayzé, however, infiltrates the family tree twofold: through both Cathy II and Razyé II. Furthermore, the addition of the third generation, Anthuria, ensures that Razyé's line will

continue on. In doing so, Condé opens up Brontë's closed loop and allows the racial 'Other' to enter, not temporarily but permanently. Such a rupture calls into question "the mythical purity and superiority of the white race, and by implication, a questioning of the hegemonic discourse that promotes such an ideal" (Swamy 69). Furthermore, Condé complicates the idea of racial superiority: the white Creoles, the privileged class, are not English by racial standards of the day, and both Gagneur children are able to cross class and race lines in order to marry into the privileged class. The pure Englishness of *Wuthering Heights* is entirely absent. As a result, Condé's creolization of the English canon is more successful than Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea*, which never fully supplants English domination.

Reimagining the Racial 'Other'

In all three modern adaptations of nineteenth century novels, 'Otherness' is shifted to the foreground. *Destroyer*, the most recent of the three modern texts, explicitly addresses current issues surrounding race and gender in a way that sets it apart from the other two pieces. The blending of genres—the story blends science fiction, horror, family drama, superhero action, all wrapped in a comic series exterior—allows a space for the overarching social commentary that runs throughout. As a sequel, *Destroyer* is not concerned about changing what has come before in two hundred years of the *Frankenstein* mythology. As a result, the new story feels fresh and relevant while not feeling the need to change what we already know about Victor Frankenstein and his monster. Both *Wide Sargasso Sea* and *Windward Heights* approach race through a colonial setting as a way to open up the original text for a more overt discussion of race, class, and gender. However, *Wide Sargasso Sea*, as a prequel, is still beholden to the

original text. Other than a slight time shift, Englishness remains ever present in Rhys' novel. Though she is given a voice and agency, Antoinette/Bertha never fully breaks free from oppression. Her fate is sealed by the events of *Jane Eyre* that constitute Part III of *Wide Sargasso Sea*. *Windward Heights*, as a remake of the original, is not bound to the events of *Wuthering Heights*, and as a result, Condé is free to deviate from Brontë's original, which is necessary in order to fully extract the Englishness from the text.

Together, these three texts do more than extend the discussion on how nineteenth-century attitudes toward race and empire continue to impact discourse and attitudes regarding otherness in the twentieth and twenty-first century. In reimagining the racial 'Other,' the modern texts also reframe the role of race in their nineteenth-century counterparts by highlighting the subtle racism that lurks in the subtexts of each original novel. LaValle, Rhys, and Condé beckon readers to explore the issues of race and 'Otherness' through their own interpretations of these characters. However, they also call readers to return to the original English novels with a new perspective to do what Dr. Josephine Baker asks of her son: to bear witness, not just to oppression and marginalization of 'Others' in our time but to take stock of the way women and people of color have been oppressed and marginalized throughout history in an effort to end the cycle.

CHAPTER VI

Conclusion

We are often captivated by the things that scare us, by the monsters that lurk in the shadows. We look on in disgust, yet we keep looking, simultaneously horrified and intrigued. Perhaps that is why we are drawn to Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, and Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*. These three texts each contain monsters in various forms: the reanimated hybrid Creature, the Creole madwoman, and the Gypsy devil. On the surface, these monsters are vengeful, heartless, violent beings that destroy those who stand in their way. And yet, the texts that contain these characters each beg the question, what makes a monster? Is monstrosity innate, unavoidable, an accident of nature?

The three characters explored in this study would suggest that we create our own monsters. Despite their many differences, the one thing that the Creature, Bertha Mason, and Heathcliff have in common is that they are not inherently evil. They each possess distinctly human longings for love, compassion, and acceptance; monstrosity is not their default. In fact, they each resist giving into their baser urges. In *Frankenstein*, the Creature seeks human companionship despite repeated rejections. When he realizes that humans are not capable of seeing past his monstrous exterior, he begs for a companion of his own kind so that he can leave humanity alone. His murderous rampage is a last resort, a reaction to a complete loss of hope. Bertha Mason is presented as an uncontrollable madwoman in *Jane Eyre*, but years of involuntary imprisonment at the hands of an aloof, unfaithful husband are at least partially responsible for her drastically diminished mental state. She has no recourse, no power, and so she reclaims power in the only way she can,

by burning down the prison that holds her captive. *Wuthering Heights*' Heathcliff is just a child when he enters the Earnshaw house, and he, too, longs for love and acceptance. He suffers abandonment in his early life, abuse at the hands of his adoptive brother, and scorn from those who view themselves as superior, and yet he retains his ability to form meaningful connections. It is not until he loses the one person with whom he claims identity that he detaches himself from rational emotions as a means of survival. Each of these characters seek human connection and are denied, arguably because of their racial 'Otherness.' The Creature is rejected because of his monstrous appearance, which includes stereotypical features of 'dark Others.' Bertha lacks the icy coolness of an English woman; her Caribbean fire is too uncontrollable, too non-English to gain Rochester's love and devotion. Heathcliff's dark skin causes all who encounter him to assume his darkness extends to his character. Once Catherine is transformed into a respectable English woman, she views a union with Heathcliff as degrading because he does not fit the role of English gentleman. Indeed, these three characters are each marginalized by their respective societies because of their non-European 'Otherness.'

Though their racial 'Otherness' dwells in the margins of their original texts, the Creature, Bertha Mason, and Heathcliff are compelling characters that invite readers to return to them and to reinterpret them within new contexts. In reinterpreting these characters, Victor LaValle, Jean Rhys, and Maryse Condé shift racial 'Otherness' from the margins to the forefront, which gives these racial 'Others' an opportunity to make new, compelling arguments about monstrosity and 'Otherness.' In *Destroyer*, LaValle depicts monstrosity through a variety of characters. Frankenstein's original Creature is mostly stripped of his humanity, a result of years of isolation that leave him with only a

thirst for revenge against his creator, but a series of new 'Others' fill out the pages to create updated arguments about race in the twenty-first century. Once again, however, the supposed 'monsters'—Akai, Josephine, and Pliers—are created by a society that views racial 'Others' as dangerous and threatening. Just as Mary Shelley suggests that the real 'monster' of her story may be Victor rather than the Creature, LaValle suggests that the real monster is the systemic racism of a white society that marginalizes and villainizes African Americans. Jean Rhys, in *Wide Sargasso Sea*, rescues Bertha Mason from the margins of *Jane Eyre* and gives her both the voice and agency that are denied her in the original text. Antoinette Cosway does not inherit madness; she has madness thrust upon her by the psychological manipulation of a husband who wants so desperately for her to fit into the mold of an English wife that he renames her Bertha. Once again, the real monster in *Wide Sargasso Sea* is not the Creole madwoman but the English husband who strips her of her identity and imprisons her in a foreign land. Razyé, the Heathcliff figure in *Windward Heights*, is still a powerful, violent figure who becomes an oppressor as a means of survival; however, his revised quest for vengeance has a political slant. He is aligned with the forces that are seeking to gain political power for the recently emancipated slaves and stands in opposition to the Linnseuil family, the former plantation owners. In each of the updated texts, the racial 'Others' are justified rather than vilified, and their 'Otherness' is prominently displayed as a source of strength rather than discounted as a weakness.

The race science of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that established and solidified pervasive stereotypes has not yet been eradicated from the Western collective consciousness. Further, these stereotypes continue to dominate the Western view of non-

European ‘Others,’ which results in a host of political and social issues, from mass incarceration to zero-tolerance immigration policies. Such views of the fearsome, dark ‘Other’ have also led to a resurgence in nationalism across America and Europe. Perhaps because issues related to race remain so prevalent, fictional ‘Others’ like the Creature, Bertha Mason, and Heathcliff maintain their relevance, even two centuries after they were first conceived. Through these characters, Shelley and the Brontë sisters, perhaps because they are women who experience their own forms of marginalization, create a compelling social commentary surrounding the racial ‘Other.’ In answer to the question posed by each of their novels—What makes a monster?—they seem to suggest that monsters are not born but, rather, created from a culture that views ‘Others’ with suspicion, intolerance, and disdain. In the social and political climate of twenty-first-century Europe and America, such arguments about the way we choose to treat racial and cultural ‘Others’ still resonates, and perhaps there is a lesson to learn from Shelley and the Brontës: when we allow our fears toward racial ‘Others’ to dominate our actions, we bear the responsibility for the monsters that we create.

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APPENDIX

BOOM! Studios
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By:

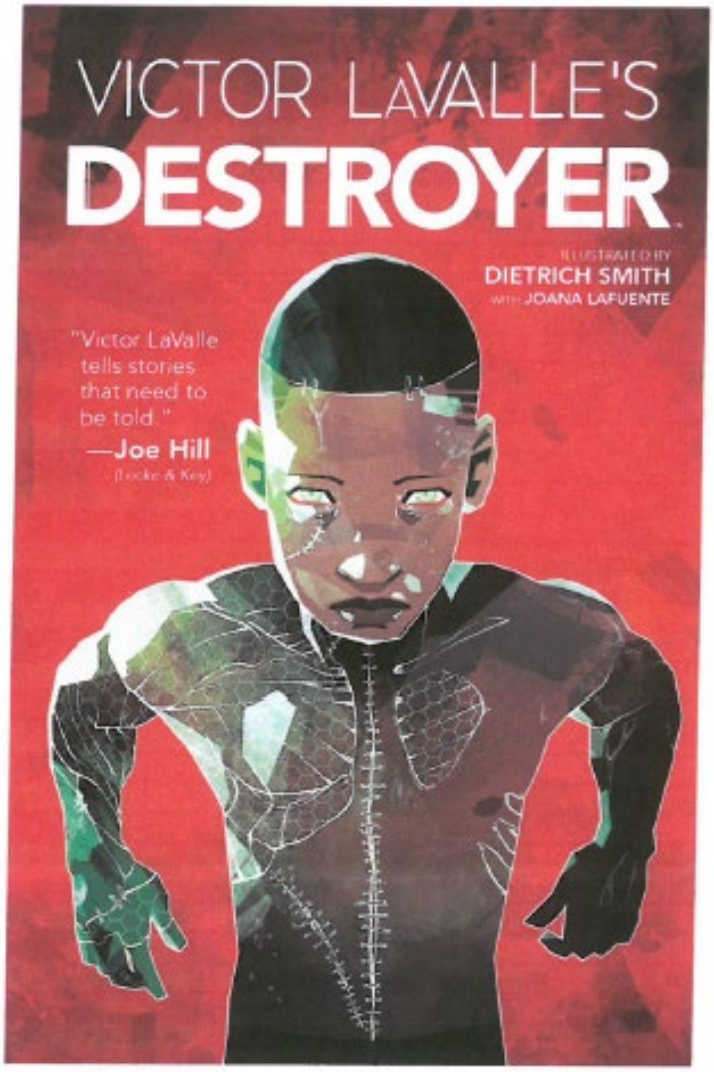
ACCEPTED AND AGREED:

Valerie Beth Ouellette

By:

EXHIBIT A

LaValle, Victor. Destroyer. Illustrated by Dietrich Smith, colored by Joana LaFuente, lettered by Jim Campbell, Boom! Studios, 2018.



VITA

Valerie Beth Oualline

EDUCATION

Master of Arts, English, **Expected December 2019**
Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, TX
Thesis Title: Monstrous 'Others': Race, Hybridity, and Intersectionality in the Nineteenth-Century Novel

Master of Education, Curriculum and Instruction, **May 2018**
Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, TX
Capstone Title: Let's Talk About It: The Impact of Individual Writing Conferences on Student Writing Performance

Bachelor of Arts, English **May 2007**
Texas A&M University, College Station, TX

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Adjunct Instructor
Laguna College of Art + Design **September 2018-present**
Thesis Development Instructor for MFA Game Design Program
Composition and Critical Reasoning Instructor for Undergraduate Program

English Teacher
Bonita High School, Bonita USD, LaVerne, CA **August 2019 – present**
English I
English II *Aug. 2019 - present*

English Teacher
College Station High School, College Station ISD, TX **August 2014 – May 2019**
English III On-Level, American Literature *Aug. 2014 – May 2019*
English IV Honors, British Literature *Aug. 2016 – May 2019*
English I Honors, World Literature *Aug. 2015 – May 2017*
AP Literature and Composition *Aug. 2014 – May 2016*

English Teacher
Franklin High School, Franklin ISD, TX **August 2006 – May 2014**
AP Literature and Composition *Aug. 2008 – May 2014*
AP Language and Composition *Aug. 2008 – May 2014*
English III On-Level, American Literature *Aug. 2008 – May 2014*
English I Pre-AP and On-Level, World Literature *Aug. 2006 – May 2008*

Substitute Teacher
Bryan ISD, TX **August 2003 – May 2006**
All Secondary Schools

Volunteer ESL and Reading Teacher
Made in the Streets, Nairobi, Kenya **2000 – 2001**

LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

English III Level Leader, College Station High School **2014 – 2019**
English IV Honors Lead Teacher, College Station High School **2016 – 2019**
Mentor Teacher, College Station High School **2014 – 2019**
District Curriculum Writing Team, College Station ISD **2018 – 2019**
Campus Administrator for turnitin.com, Franklin High School **2011 – 2012**
RtI Committee Member, Franklin High School **2011 – 2012**
Mentor Teacher, Franklin High School **2012 – 2014**
District Assessment Writer, Franklin High School **2011 – 2012**

COACHING AND ADVISING

SkillsUSA Quiz Bowl Coach, College Station High School **2016 – 2019**
Academic UIL Coach, Franklin High School **2008 – 2014**
Student Council Sponsor, Franklin High School **2008 – 2014**
Varsity Cheer Coach, Franklin High School **2011 – 2014**
Head Sponsor for the Junior Class, Franklin High School **2012 – 2014**

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Presenter, SCLA Conference on Monstrosity, *Frankenstein* Panel **October 2018**
"'A Race of Devils': Frankenstein's Monster and the Irrational Fear of the Immigrant"

Presenter, College Station ISD You Matter Conference **August 2018**
"Writing to Learn: Writing Across the Disciplines"

Presenter, College Station ISD You Matter Conference **August 2017**
"Providing Timely Writing Feedback…without Losing Your Sleep or Your Sanity"

Presenter, College Station ISD You Matter Conference **August 2016**
"Do More Than 'Turn It In' with turnitin.com"

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

Society for Comparative Literature and the Arts (SCLA)
National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE)
Association of Texas Professional Educators (ATPE)

CERTIFICATIONS

Texas Standard Teaching Certification **Valid August 2007 – March 2021**
8-12 English Language Arts and Reading
8-12 Journalism
8-12 Speech

California Single Subject Credential **Valid August 2019 – July 2024**
High School Language Arts